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# LETTERS

TO

A FRIEND,

ON THE

EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, AND DUTIES

OF THE

Christian Religion.

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BY OLINTHUS GREGORY, LL. D.

OF THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, WOOLWICH.

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VOL. II.

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Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above,  
and cometh from the Father of Lights. JAMES.

These things write we unto you, that your joy may be  
full. JOHN.

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THIRD EDITION,

WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY,

47, PATERNOSTER-ROW;

AND JOHN HATCHARD, PICCADILLY.

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1815.

LETTERS

A FRIEND

EXPERIENCES, DUTIES, AND DUTIES

Christian Religion

BY MARTIN GEORGE, LL.D.

THE REV. MARTIN GEORGE, LL.D.

VOL. II.

THIRD EDITION

LONDON:

WILLIAM B. ELDON, BARRISTER AT LAW

AND JOHN BARNARD, STATIONER

C. Baldwin, Printer,  
New Bridge-street, London.

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## ERRATA IN VOL. II.

- Page 99, bottom line of the note, *for* Greeks *read* Greek  
— 106, line 15, *for* Nathanae *read* Nathanael  
— 149, — 5 from bottom, *for* csuh *read* such  
— 242, — 2, note, *insert* me to reconcile the  
— 243, — 3, *for* etter *read* letter.

# LETTERS

ON THE

EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, AND DUTIES,

OF THE

*CHRISTIAN RELIGION.*

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## LETTER XII.

*Introductory Letter on the Leading Doctrines of the  
Christian Religion.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is much more easy for you to conjecture, than for me to describe, the pleasure I received from learning that you are now fully persuaded of the truth and Divine authority of the Christian Religion: and I cheerfully accede to your renewed request that this series of letters shall be extended until I have furnished you with a view of the principal doctrines proposed in Scripture for your belief, and of the grand duties which we are called upon as Christians to discharge. Had I not, however, a decided conviction of your supreme love of truth, and of your



steadfast determination to follow it whithersoever it may lead you, I should be somewhat apprehensive that, in performing this second part of the task your friendly deference to my opinions has assigned me, my efforts will be attended with less success than they have been in what I have already attempted. The truths which lie at the basis of the Christian system are so humiliating to human nature, so revolting to the sentiments of those who have too exalted ideas of the powers of reason, and who cherish erroneous conceptions of the dignity of man, that though they are so plainly stamped in the universal character and conduct of mankind, that "he who runs may read;" yet they require to be asserted *repeatedly* in the Word of God before they receive our assent: and after all we yield that assent more reluctantly than to any other truths ever presented to the mind.

Still, when a person admits, as you do, that the Holy Scriptures are a collection of books whose authors were divinely inspired, were led into all necessary truth, and preserved from all doctrinal error by the superintendence of God himself, he at once sees the necessity of studying these sacred treasures under different feelings, and with different intentions, from those with which he turns to the perusal of any other work. He is aware that there are two points known to God, the inspirer of the Scriptures, which man cannot comprehend; that is to say, "*the secrets of the heart, and the succession of times.*" He therefore interprets the Bible with that entire submission

of his own understanding to the divine teaching, which such a persuasion is calculated to produce; and proceeds to the study of Theology with the maxim of Lord Bacon in his head at least, if not in his heart, that “by how much any divine mystery is more unpalatable and incredible, by so much the more honour is given to God in *believing*, and the *victory of our faith* is made more noble.” (a)

Now to me it appears impossible, and I trust you will find it so, for any person attentively to read the Bible, and especially the New Testament, free from any previous bias, without coming to the conclusion that what distinguishes Christianity from all other religious systems is the circumstance of its being a *restorative dispensation*. The great dramatic poet, who, in one of his admirable descriptions of mercy, remarked that

—“All the souls that are were forfeit once;  
“And he, that might the ’vantage best have took,  
“Found out the remedy;”

correctly expressed, whether he intended it or not, the most humbling fact, and most consoling doctrine, the Bible proclaims to us. Had not “*all* sinned and “come short of the glory of God,” it would never have been declared that “Christ is the propitiation “for the *sins of the whole world*.” (b) Nor can we imagine that our Lord would himself have declared,

(a) Advancement of Learning, book ix.

(b) 1 John, ii, 2.

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“ I came not to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance;” (c) or the Apostle Paul have affirmed, “ it is worthy of *all* acceptation that Christ Jesus “ came into the world to *SAVE sinner*s;” (d) had not the universal prevalence of iniquity, in all ages, called for the Divine invention of that stupendous scheme of mercy, whereby God should at once “ be just, and “ yet the justifier of the ungodly.” (e)

Christianity, it is true, is distinguishable from all other systems by the purity, excellency, and extent of the morality it enforces; yet this is not, I conceive, its most prominent characteristic. It no where presents us with a connected scheme of ethics, but it does far better in advancing the most simple precepts relative to every part of moral duty, and accompanying them with the most powerful incentives to upright and holy conduct. Its grand peculiarity consists in assuming the fact that man is in a fallen state, that he has lost the image of God, that he is of himself incapable of regaining the favour of his Creator, and in providing a remedy by which man may be cured of his moral disorder; this remedy being no less than the gift of “ *the Son of God*;” who, in relation to mankind, is not so frequently called their pattern, as “ the Physician of Souls,” “ the great Deliverer,” “ the *Saviour* of the world.”

The more intimately you become acquainted with Christianity, as depicted in the New Testament, the more forcibly will you be struck with the wisdom of

its constitution. It does not, if I may so say, insult and triumph over man by prescribing him a code of laws which he cannot obey, by referring him to statutes every one of which he has broken, and commanding him to preserve them entire: but it takes man *as he is*, provides for his restoration, points out the means of salvation, invites him to embrace those means, and then presents him with precepts, by the observance of which he may “adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour *in all things*.” (f) The scheme by which all this is effected is, doubtless, extraordinary; but it is not less worthy of acceptance on that account. Had it not been far beyond human capacity, and human discovery, it need not have been revealed. God need not make supernatural communications to reveal to us what might have been found out by a natural process. Having ascertained that the Bible is the word of God, it is our duty to receive all it makes known to us (whether it coincide or not with *our* preconceived notions), without appeal to any other quarter. ‘I cannot comprehend the reason of *this*,’ may an inquirer after scriptural truth often say, ‘but it is God who declares it; I receive it on his authority, and I humbly rely upon his promise, that what I know not now, I *shall* know hereafter.’ (g)

It is of extreme importance to have right views of the Christian system in general, because our eternal safety depends upon it. Probably there is no com-

(f) Titus, ii. 10.

(g) John, xiii. 7.

munion, nor any individual, whose religious notions are in *every* point correct; because human explications even of the true religion are likely more or less to be effected by human imperfection. Still, we may rest assured, because God has promised it, that the devout, humble, and sincere inquirer, shall, in every thing that is essential to salvation, be preserved from error. Now, among the various sects into which the Christian world is divided, all except *one* embrace the hypothesis that Christianity is a *provision of mercy* for an apostate and sinful world, through a *divine* Mediator. To determine whether the majority or the minority are wrong in this respect is of the utmost consequence: for they who adopt this hypothesis and they who reject it, “having different objects of worship, and different grounds of confidence, *must* be “allowed to be of religions essentially different.” What, then, saith the Scriptures? for to them must be our ultimate appeal.

A man of plain understanding, who has no previously adopted system to favour, who reads for the sake of arriving at truth, and who therefore attaches to Scripture its most palpable and obvious meaning, being persuaded that it is incompatible with the character of a *revelation from God* to abound in ænigmas, will soon find that the evangelical scheme is this:—God, foreseeing the fatal apostasy into which the whole human race would fall, did not determine to deal in a way of strict severity with us, so as to consign us over to universal ruin and inevitable damnation; but, on the contrary, determined to enter into

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a treaty of peace and reconciliation, and to publish to all whom the Gospel should reach, the express offers of life and glory, in a certain method which his infinite wisdom judged suitable to the purity of his nature, and the honour of his government. This method is so astonishing and peculiar, that for man to have proposed it, independent of Divine teaching, would have approached to blasphemy, and to have believed it on any other than divine authority, next to impossible. "God so loved the world as to give *his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believed in *him* should not perish, but enjoy everlasting life." He sent into the world "the brightness of his glory, *and the express image of his person*," (*h*) partaker of his own divine perfections and honours, to be not merely a teacher of righteousness, and a messenger of grace, but also a *sacrifice* for the sins of men. Accordingly, at such a time as infinite wisdom saw most fitted for the purpose, the Lord Jesus Christ "when *he took upon him to deliver man* did not abhor the *virgin's womb*," but was *born* "of a virgin," (*i*) and appeared in human flesh: after he had fulfilled the whole law, gone through incessant fatigues, and borne all the injuries which the ingratitude and malice of men could inflict, he voluntarily "submitted him *self to death, even the death of the cross*," and, having been "*delivered for our offences, was raised*

(*h*) John, iii. 16. Heb. i. 3.

(*i*) Is. vii. 14. Matt. i. 23. Luke, i. 31.

*“again for our justification.”* (k) “When he had overcome the sharpness of death, he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers:” forty days after his resurrection he “ascended into heaven,” in sight of his disciples, where he has become our Intercessor; and, agreeably to his promise, sent down his Spirit upon his apostles to enable them, in the most persuasive and authoritative manner, “to preach the Gospel;” giving it in charge to them and their successors to publish it “to every creature;” and declaring that all who repent and believe in that Gospel may be saved, may be released from punishment, and restored to the image of God, by virtue of its abiding energy, and the immutable power and grace of its Divine Author. (l)

It is possible that a belief of these truths, striking and momentous as they are, may float loosely in the understanding, without being efficacious. But they are exquisitely formed to affect us deeply; and whenever the secret links which connect the understanding and the heart are acted upon by the mysterious energy of him “who knoweth our frame” and all its hidden springs, this belief leads to that saving change which is called conversion. Then he who is the subject of it becomes “a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things become new.” (m) He has new apprehen-

(k) Rom. iv. 25.

(l) See Doddridge's Works, vol. i, p. 274.

(m) 2 Cor. v. 17.



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sions of things, new hopes, new fears, new joys, new sorrows, new affections, new employments, new prospects, and, it may be, new friends and new foes; he feels a perfect renovation of character; his greatest solicitude is to be "a fellow worker with God, and a fellow heir with the saints:" and, impelled by the joint influence of delight and self-abasement, he may be ready to exclaim, with Baxter, "O wonderful! that Heaven will be familiar with earth, God with man, the Most High with a worm, and the Most Holy with a vile sinner! Man refuses me when God entertains me. Those I never wronged reproach me; and God, whom I have unspeakably injured, invites and entreats me, and condescends to me, as if he were obliged to serve me. Men may abhor me, whom I have deserved well of: but God from whom I deserve eternal torments, graciously accepts me. I upbraid myself with my sins, but he now upbraids me not: I condemn myself for them, but he will not condemn me. He forgives me sooner than I can forgive myself. I have peace with him, before I can have peace in my own conscience."

The Christian religion, as pourtrayed in the Gospel, differs from all others in furnishing an *internal* principle from which the purest conduct emanates. It is not a religion of forms and ceremonies, but the religion of the heart. The language of God to every Christian is, "*My Son, give me thine heart.*" The true Christian, as depicted in the New Testament, is a faithful and active servant, who inquires what his

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Lord's will is, and performs it with cheerful alacrity. He makes it "his meat and his drink to *do* the will " of his heavenly Father;" and he knows that, conformably with that will, he must "relieve the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." (n) He considers it his duty, and finds it his delight, to please God, and render as far as possible his fellow-creatures happy; to "add to his faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." (o) Still he walks as on the confines of the eternal state, and is anxious therefore to be "dead unto the world" and "alive unto God," to attain more and more of the Divine image, to "grow up to Christ in all things," to enjoy "fellowship with God," and, "if he be risen with Christ, to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (p)

Such are the dispositions and the employments which are required to be exemplified in the sincere Christian. He is exhorted to flee from a contrary temper and conduct, by the assurance that "the wrath of God *abideth* on" all those who reject the offers of the Gospel; and he is stimulated to per-

(n) James, i. 27.

(o) 2 Pet. i. 5—7.

(p) Gal. vi. 14. Rom. vi. 11, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Eph. iv. 15. 1 John, i. 3. Col. iii. 1.

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severe in the Christian course by the assurance that heaven is the inheritance of every sincere and humble follower of Jesus. His hopes are constantly directed to that happy period when he shall be “ever with the Lord, to behold” and participate in “his glory.” He lives under the persuasion that, after he has passed through the “valley of the shadow of death,” God will wipe away all tears from his eyes, and he will be no more exposed to fear or sorrow, to mourning or death. He believes that his spirit will be united to his glorified body in those delightful regions, where an enemy shall never enter, and from whence a friend shall never depart; where there will be satiety without disgust, day and no night, joy and no weeping, difference in degree and yet all full, “love without dissimulation,” excellency without envy, multitudes without confusion, harmony without discord; where the understanding shall be astonishingly enriched, the will perfectly satisfied, the affections all transformed into love and joy; where “the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed him, and lead him unto living fountains of waters;” (q) where God shall be the light and the glory of the place for ever and ever !

These, in brief, are the doctrines of the New Testament, the “fruits of the Spirit,” manifested in those who believe, and the glorious expectations of a future world which are intended at once to stimulate and

to reward “ a patient continuance in well doing.”

‘ But these,’ you will probably say, ‘ are not recognised by many who call themselves Christians; for

‘ there are many that profess a belief in Christianity,

‘ who nevertheless ridicule the idea of living under

‘ its power. If that system of religion, which is

‘ inculcated in the New Testament, teach, as your

‘ language clearly implies, the depravity of human

‘ nature, the necessity of regeneration, the influences

‘ of the Spirit, particular Providence, the atonement

‘ and the Divinity of Jesus Christ, justification by

‘ faith, the resurrection of the body, and the eternity

‘ of future punishment; it teaches what not many

‘ rich, not many noble, not many wise, are prepared

‘ to receive, and what none *can* receive without being

‘ exposed in consequence to contumely, derision, and

‘ reproach.’ While I acknowledge the justice of this observation, I would wish to guard you against drawing any such conclusions from it as would be unfavourable to a cordial reception of the great and essential peculiarities of the evangelical system. That several of the rich and noble should reject the religion of Jesus Christ is not at all to be wondered at, when it is recollected that the most genuine fruits of that religion are meekness, humility, godly simplicity, an aversion to pomp and display;—dispositions, which flow in a current directly opposite to all the natural tendencies of opulence, and which, notwithstanding (such is the irresistible energy of Christian principles), have often been found to adorn the character of per-

sons of the most exalted rank. Blessed be God, there are those

“ Who wear a coronet and pray : ”

there are also monarchs who delight in acknowledging their allegiance to the King of kings, and whose piety is to them a greater ornament than the richest gem which decks their crowns. So that God is not without witnesses, nor Jesus Christ without sincere disciples, among those who surround, or those who sit upon, earthly thrones.

As to the frequent rejection of the peculiarities of the Christian religion by men of learning and science, neither can that be a matter of surprise. It is very possible to know much without being *wise*, and especially without being “ wise unto salvation.”

“ —Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
“ Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
“ In heads replete with thoughts of other men,  
“ Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
“ Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
“ The mere materials with which wisdom builds,  
“ Till smooth’d, and squar’d, and fitted to its place,  
“ Does but encumber whom it seems t’enrich.  
“ Knowledge is proud that he has learn’d so much ;  
“ Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.”

COWPER.

That great literary and philosophical endowments may be possessed by persons, who, notwithstanding, have the most low and grovelling conceptions of almost every thing connected with religion, is evident from the sketch of the notions of heathen poets, le-

gislators, and philosophers, which I presented you in an early part of these letters. From that sketch you would perceive, that while no subject in art or science was too lofty or too difficult for the acquisition of those men, no object in nature was too mean, no conception of the basest mind too obscene, to serve as objects of worship: there you saw that the men whose genius has been the admiration of all successive ages, whose performances as poets, orators, historians, logicians, or mathematicians, are, after the lapse of two thousand years, held up as models of excellence in their respective kinds,—were yet sunk in such deplorable ignorance respecting religion, as to be not a whit superior to the most barbarous and uncultivated inhabitants of South America, or New Zealand. But the reason is evident. The reception of religious truth depends on the state of the heart, not on that of the intellect; and hence it has happened that though some men of enlarged intellect have had hearts in which the seeds of grace could not germinate, there have been others, such as NEWTON and EULER, who, while they have extorted from nature some of her profoundest secrets, and have illuminated the world by their discoveries, have thought it their greatest honour to “sit at the feet of Jesus,” to imbibe the pure spirit of the Gospel, and to be not merely philosophical, but practical and devotional, believers of Christianity, including its peculiarities and mysteries.

I am anxious, my friend, to impress it upon your

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mind, that Christianity, apart from its distinguishing doctrines (if it be possible to conceive of so strange a disruption of body and soul, in that which will endure for ever), will have no firm hold upon the heart; nor, in those great conjunctures where its aid is most necessary, can it reasonably be expected to have any abiding influence upon the conduct. I wish you, farther, to believe (and trust I shall, ere I close these letters, succeed in causing you to believe) that there is no intermediate ground in argument, which a fair, candid, and unsophistical reasoner can render tenable, between pure Deism, and moderate orthodoxy; that is, between the system exploded in my first letter, and that which in the remainder of the series I purpose to defend. Let me also be permitted to remark, that it is no *new* scheme of religion which I am recommending for your adoption. I have not argued, nor will I argue, exclusively in favour of Calvinism, or Arminianism, or Methodism, or any set of opinions of human fabrication; but shall endeavour to attain that middle point where all that is good in either seems to meet, and all that is exceptionable to be excluded; (*q*) and therefore shall defend those sen-

(*q*) Since the publication of the first edition of these Letters, I have met with two passages in the writings of Dr. Watts, which, as they very clearly express sentiments on the disputed topics, analogous to those which I have long entertained, I shall beg leave to transcribe into this note.

“ Let it be observed that when the Remonstrants assert that  
“ Christ died for all mankind, merely to purchase conditional sal-  
“ vation for them, and when those who profess to be the strictest  
“ Calvinists assert that Christ died only and merely to procure ef-



timents and doctrines which are so *clearly* contained in the Bible, that none deny them who are not in consequence compelled to give up the authority of

“fectual pardon and salvation for the elect; it is not because the  
 “whole Scripture every where expressly or plainly reveals or as-  
 “serts the particular sentiments of either of these sects, with an ex-  
 “clusion of the other: but the reason of these different assertions  
 “of men is this, that the holy writers in different texts, *pursuing*  
 “different subjects, and speaking to different persons, sometimes  
 “SEEM to favour each of these two opinions; and men, being at a  
 “loss to reconcile them by any medium, run into different extremes,  
 “and entirely follow one of these tracks of thought, and neglect  
 “the other. But surely, if there can be a way found to reconcile  
 “these two doctrines of the absolute salvation of the elect, by  
 “the obedience, righteousness, and death of Christ procuring it  
 “for them, with all things necessary to the possession of it; and  
 “also of the conditional salvation provided for all mankind, and  
 “offered to them in the Gospel, through the all-sufficient and over-  
 “flowing value of the obedience and sufferings of Christ; this will  
 “be the most fair, natural, and easy way of reconciling these dif-  
 “ferent texts of Scripture, without any strain or torture put upon  
 “any of them.” Watts’s *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*, Quest. 13.  
 See also, Baxter on Doctrinal Controversies, pp. 17, 18; and the  
 Rev. Rob. Hall’s preface to the 3d edition of his father’s “*Help*  
 “to Zion’s Travellers.”

The second passage relates to the Divinity of Christ. “In my  
 “younger years (says he) when I endeavoured to form my judg-  
 “ment on that article, the Socinians were the chief or only popular  
 “opponents. Upon an honest search of the Scripture, and a com-  
 “parison of their notions with it, I wondered how it was possible  
 “for any person to believe the Bible to be the Word of God, and  
 “yet to believe that *Jesus Christ was a mere man*. So perverse and  
 “preposterous did their sense of the Scripture appear, that *I was*  
 “amazed how men, who pretended to reason above their neighbours,  
 “could wrench and strain their understandings, and subdue their  
 “assent to such interpretations. And I am of the same mind still.”  
 Pref. to *Chris. Doc. of Trinity*.

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some part of Sacred Writ,—which were held and taught by the ablest and best men in the first three centuries,—which warmed the breasts of saints and martyrs,—which have inspired the hopes and regulated the conduct of a great majority of pious men in all ages of the universal church,—which, through the Providence of God, have been inserted in the formularies of *most* established churches,—and which, if language have a plain and obvious interpretation, are defined in the Articles, incorporated in the Ritual, and enforced in the Homilies of the Church of England.

After all, I do not pretend to deny that the adoption of these opinions, and especially the manifestation of them in a holy, pure, and exemplary life, will subject you to the ridicule of the most thoughtless of your former associates. But for this you will be amply compensated by enjoying peace of conscience, and “reconciliation with God.” And that you may be in some measure fortified by the observations of others against the derision to which you will be exposed, allow me to extract for your use three or four quotations from authors of the present times, whom no person of taste and judgment (to say nothing of piety) will affect to despise.

You may, perhaps, be called an enthusiast, or at least told that these notions lead to enthusiasm; but you may repel the charge by the following quotation. “The preacher (or the religious writer) who neglects the *peculiarities* of the Gospel, neglects the

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“ most profound and the most copious—the most  
 “ important and the most interesting—the most im-  
 “ pressive and the most moral, part of his profession;  
 “ and, above all, he affords an advantage to the  
 “ delusions of *enthusiasts*, of which an opposite  
 “ system would effectually deprive them. Enthu-  
 “ siasm, in the sense here used, is not a natural pro-  
 “ duct of the Gospel, but an accidental perversion  
 “ of its tendencies; the origin of which is to be traced,  
 “ in every age, to *the neglect of the Gospel as a pecu-*  
 “ *liar system*, and to the confounding its authorita-  
 “ tive sanctions with the more indefinite obligations  
 “ of natural morality. Look at the early ages of  
 “ Christianity, when its peculiarities were first com-  
 “ municated, and largely insisted on, as the *essential*  
 “ *parts* of the system, in every sermon. The effect  
 “ was powerful, and it was *moral*, beyond all ex-  
 “ ample,—producing the utmost efforts of heroic  
 “ and disinterested virtue,—with very few, and com-  
 “ paratively feeble, examples of that wretched en-  
 “ thusiasm, or interested hypocrisy, which combines  
 “ the profession of the most important truths with  
 “ the practice of the most contemptible and sordid  
 “ vices.” (r)

Seeing that the vocabulary of reproach is indefi-  
 nite, others may apply to you a different term, and  
 brand you as a *methodist*. If so, try whether you  
 cannot laugh at the unmeaning absurdity of the appel-

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lation. "The vain and malignant spirit (says a  
"most acute and profound Essayist), which had des-  
"cried the elevated piety of the Puritans, sought  
"about, as Milton describes the wicked-one in Pa-  
"radise, for some vehicle in which it might again,  
"with facility, come forth to hiss at zealous Christ-  
"ianity, and in another lucky moment fell on the  
"term *methodist*. If there is no *sense* in the word as  
"now applied, there seems, however, to be a great  
"deal of aptitude and execution. It has the advan-  
"tage of being comprehensive as a general denomi-  
"nation, and yet humiliating as a special badge, for  
"every thing that ignorance and folly may mistake  
"for fanaticism, or that malice may wilfully assign  
"to it. Whenever a grave formalist feels it his duty  
"to sneer at those operations of religion on the pas-  
"sions which he never felt, he has only to call them  
"methodistical; and notwithstanding that the word  
"is both so trite and so vague, he feels as if he had  
"uttered a good pungent thing. There is satiric  
"smartness in the *word*, though there be none in  
"the *man*. In default of keen faculty in the mind,  
"it is delightful thus to find something that will  
"do as well, ready bottled up in odd terms. It is  
"equally convenient to a profligate, or a coxcomb,  
"whose propriety of character is to be supported by  
"laughing indiscriminately at all the symptoms of  
"religion; the one to evince that his courage is not  
"sapped by conscience, the other to make the best  
"advantage of his instinct of catching at impiety as

“ a substitute for sense. Each feels that he has  
“ manfully *set them down*, when he has called them  
“ methodism. Such terms have a pleasant facility of  
“ throwing away the matter in question to scorn,  
“ without any trouble of making a definite, intelli-  
“ gible charge of extravagance or delusion, and at-  
“ tempting to prove it.” (s)

Others, to give vent to their contempt, may charac-  
terise you as *evangelical*. And “ such is the new  
“ meaning now assigned to old terms, that we doubt  
“ if the application of the epithet in question would  
“ not excite a sneer, if not a suspicion, in some minds  
“ against the character of Isaiah himself, were we to  
“ name him by his ancient denomination, *The Evan-*  
“ *gelical Prophet*. This laconic term includes a  
“ diatribe in a word. It is established into a sweeping  
“ term of derision of all serious Christians, and its  
“ compass is stretched to such an extent as to involve  
“ within it every shade and shape of real or fictitious  
“ piety from the elevated, but sound and sober Chris-  
“ tian, to the wildest and most absurd fanatic; its  
“ large enclosure takes in all, from the most honour-  
“ able heights of erudition to the most contemptible  
“ depths of ignorance. Every man who is serious,  
“ and every man who is silly; every man who is  
“ holy, and every man who is mad, is included in  
“ this comprehensive epithet. We see perpetually  
“ that solidity, sublimity, and depth, are not found

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“ a protection against the magic mischief of this portentous appellation.” (t)

The men, who are so fond of employing terms of reproach to designate those who think that religion is something more than a mere matter of speculation, seem to have forgotten that the first and most indispensable requisite in religion is *seriousness*; and that levity in conversation upon religious topics, or sneering at men who are *in earnest* whenever such topics are introduced, has a very prejudicial effect upon those who indulge in such practices. Of such you may call the attention to the sentiments of a late venerable moralist and divine, as exhibited in the passage below.

“ The turn which this levity usually takes is in jests and raillery upon the opinions, or the peculiarities, or the persons, of men of particular sects, or who bear particular names: especially if they happen to be more serious than ourselves. And of late this loose, and I can hardly help calling it *profane*, humour has been directed chiefly against the followers of methodism. But against whomsoever it happens to be pointed, it has all the bad effects, both upon the speaker and the hearer, which we have noticed; and as in other instances, so in this, give me leave to say that it is very much misplaced. In the first place, were the doctrines and sentiments of those who bear this name ever so foolish and extravagant (I do not say that they are

(t) Mrs. More's Christian Morals, vol. ii. p. 81.

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“ either), this proposition I shall always maintain to  
 “ be true, viz. that *the wildest opinion that ever was*  
 “ *entertained, in matters of religion, is more rational*  
 “ *than unconcern about these matters.* Upon this  
 “ subject nothing is so absurd as indifference: no  
 “ folly so contemptible as thoughtlessness and levity.  
 “ In the next place, do methodists deserve this treat-  
 “ ment? Be their particular doctrines what they  
 “ may, the professors of these doctrines appear to be  
 “ in earnest about them: and a man who is in earnest  
 “ about religion *cannot be a bad man*, still less a fit  
 “ subject for derision. I am no methodist myself.  
 “ In their leading doctrines I differ from them. But  
 “ I contend that sincere men are not for these, or  
 “ indeed any, doctrines, to be made laughing-stocks  
 “ to others. I do not bring in the case of the me-  
 “ thodists for the purpose of vindicating their tenets,  
 “ but for the purpose of observing (and I wish that  
 “ the observation may weigh with all my readers)  
 “ that the custom of treating their characters and  
 “ persons, their preaching or their preachers, their  
 “ meetings or worship, with scorn, has the pernicious  
 “ consequence of destroying our own serious-  
 “ ness, together with the seriousness of those who  
 “ hear, or join in, such conversation; especially if  
 “ they be young persons; and I am persuaded that  
 “ much mischief is actually done in this very  
 “ way.” (v)

(v) Dr. Paley's Posthumous Sermons, Ser. 1. On “ Seriousness  
 “ in Religion indispensable above all other Dispositions.”



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Leaving these admirable sentiments to make their full impression on your mind, or to steel you against the puny attacks of those who imagine burlesque and buffoonery are the proper instruments to correct what *they* deem fanatical eccentricities, while others may class them among religious excellencies :

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend.

May 30, 1811.

## LETTER XIII.

*On the Fall of Man, and the Depravity of Human Nature.*

PLATO, as you will doubtless recollect, defined man, in his time, a biped without feathers: and DIOGENES, in order to show what he deemed the absurdity of this definition, plucked all the feathers from a cock, and, placing it in the midst of the academy, exclaimed, "There is one of Plato's men!" Diogenes, it seems, was not aware that Plato's definition was suggested by a tradition which had reached him, that man was once in a far superior state with regard to morals, but had been degraded by vice, and was now so lowered as to become, with respect to his former condition, what a bird would be when stripped of his feathers, so as to be no longer able to fly. In conformity with this, the Platonists in general believed a pre-existent state, in which all souls had sinned, and thus lost their wings, whereby they were once capable of ascending; and so they sunk into these bodies partly as a punishment for former follies. This was called in their form of speech πτερορρυσις, or a *moulting of their wings*. Their daily experience in themselves, and their wise observance of others, convincing them that all mankind come into the world with a propensity to vice rather than to virtue; and that man is not such a creature now as he came

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from his Maker's hand, but is some way or other *plucked of his feathers*, or degenerated from his primitive rectitude and glory.

So again, MARCUS ANTONINUS confessed that men *were born mere slaves* to their appetites and passions; and very many of the Heathen philosophers, guided only by the light of nature, affirmed that men are of themselves destitute of true knowledge, purity, and reason: while in the Hebrew Scriptures, the word used for man as the son of Adam, is *Enosh*, indicating that he is "*sorry, wretched, and incurably sick.*" Several modern philosophers, however, and some modern *Divines*, represent this doctrine as absurd and contemptible in the highest degree: on which account it will be proper to employ a little time in ascertaining its correctness, and evincing its conformity, as well with what may be observed in the world, as with the declarations of Scripture.

According to every conception we can form of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, as well as according to the most express and unequivocal language of the Bible, "God formed man *upright*:" he was furnished with a clear and sagacious mind, with reason bright and strong, and possessed transcendent qualifications for the most elevated happiness. But, that he might be *accountable*, he was necessarily created *free*; and, that he might never forget that he was under the cognizance and dominion of a moral governor, a test of obedience was set before him.

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“ God made thee perfect, not immutable ;  
“ And good he made thee ; but to persevere  
“ He left it in thy power ; ordain’d thy will  
“ By nature free, not overrul’d by fate  
“ Inextricable, or strict necessity :  
“ Our voluntary service he requires,  
“ Not our necessitated ; such with him  
“ Finds no acceptance, nor can find ; for how  
“ Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve  
“ Willing or no, who will but what they must  
“ By destiny, and can no other choose ? ”

MILTON.

In this respect, God did not deal worse with man than with his other creatures ; but man acted worse towards his Maker than any of them. He did not conform to the laws of his nature, but broke his allegiance to God by choosing evil instead of good. Thus he ruined his original happy state, and, according to the constitution of things,

“ Brought death into the world, and all our woe ; ”

his whole nature and race becoming tainted, so that he was viler than the brutes that perish, forfeited his native blessings, and, with his progeny, became rebels, and obnoxious to their Maker’s displeasure. Without having regard to this original degeneracy, it is hard, nay, I believe impossible, to account satisfactorily for the poor, dark, stupid, and wretched circumstances, in which so great a part of mankind are brought into this world, in which they grow up age after age in gross ignorance and vice, thoughtless

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of their duty to the God that created them, and negligent of the true happiness flowing from the enjoyment of his favour.

The history of the Fall of Man is succinctly related, as you will doubtless remember, in the third chapter of the book of Genesis. Its effects are indelibly marked upon every individual, inasmuch as “in Adam all die;” and even upon the earth itself, which, still groaning under the original malediction, brings forth “thorns, and thistles, and briars,” and thus will continue to do till “the restitution of all things.” These are not, as has been often insinuated, the notions of men of distempered minds, made imbecile by infirmity, or soured by disappointment but of the wisest and best men in all ages. Consult the writings of the Christian Fathers, and you will find JUSTIN MARTYR, in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, saying, “The whole race of men descending from Adam, have become liable to death and to the deception of the serpent, each of them by reason of the same thing having fallen under the influence of sin.” CLEMENS ROMANUS, and others, most fully express the same sentiment. Attend also to the language of the Reformers, and especially to the founders of the English Church. “Forasmuch (say they) as the true knowledge of ourselves is very necessary to come to the right knowledge of God, ye have heard how humbly all good men ought always to think of themselves.”—“The Holy Ghost, in writing the holy Scripture, is in nothing

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“ more diligent than pulling down man’s vain-glory  
 “ and pride, which of all vices is most universally  
 “ grafted in all mankind, even from the *first infection*  
 “ of our first father Adam.”——“ Of ourselves we  
 “ be crab trees that can bring forth no apples. We  
 “ be of ourselves of such earth, as can but bring forth  
 “ weeds, nettles, brambles, briars, cockle, and darnel.  
 “ Our fruits be declared in the fifth chapter of Gala-  
 “ tians. We have neither faith, charity, hope,  
 “ patience, chastity, nor any thing else that good is,  
 “ but of God; and therefore these virtues be called  
 “ there *the fruits of the Holy Ghost*, and not the fruits  
 “ of man.”——“ We are, of ourselves, very sinful,  
 “ wretched, and damnable. Of ourselves, and by  
 “ ourselves, we are not able either to think a good  
 “ thought, or work a good deed, so that we can find  
 “ in ourselves no hope of salvation, but rather what-  
 “ soever maketh unto our destruction. *O Israel, thy*  
 “ *destruction cometh of THYSELF, but in ME only is thy*  
 “ *help and comfort.*” (w)

“ Our very virtues (says Richard Hooker) may  
 “ be snares unto us. The enemy that waiteth for  
 “ all occasions to work our ruin, hath found it  
 “ harder to overthrow an humble sinner, than a  
 “ proud saint. There is no man’s case so dan-  
 “ gerous as his whom Satan hath persuaded that  
 “ his own righteousness shall present him blameless  
 “ in the sight of God. If we could say, we were  
 “ not guilty of any thing at all in our consciences (we

) Homily on the Misery of all Mankind: see also Article the 9th.

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“ know ourselves far from this innocency; we cannot  
“ say, we know nothing by ourselves; but if we could)  
“ should we therefore plead not guilty before the pre-  
“ sence of our Judge, who sees farther into our hearts  
“ than we ourselves can do? If our hands did never  
“ offer violence to our brethren, *a bloody thought doth*  
“ *prove us murderers before him*: if we had never  
“ opened our mouth to utter any scandalous, offensive,  
“ or hurtful word, *the cry of our secret cogitations is*  
“ *heard in the ears of God*. If we did not commit  
“ the sins, which daily and hourly, either in deed,  
“ word, or thoughts, we do commit; yet in the *good*  
“ things which we do, how many defects are inter-  
“ mingled! God, in that which is done, respecteth  
“ the mind and intention of the doer. Cut off, then,  
“ all those things wherein we have regarded our own  
“ glory, those things which men do to please men,  
“ and to satisfy our own liking, those things which  
“ we do for any by respect, not sincerely and purely  
“ for the love of God; and a small score will serve for  
“ the number of our righteous deeds. Let the  
“ holiest and best things which we do, be considered:  
“ we are never better affected unto God than when we  
“ pray; yet when we pray how are our affections  
“ many times distracted! How little reverence do we  
“ show unto the grand majesty of God, unto whom  
“ we speak! How little remorse of our own miseries!  
“ How little taste of the sweet influence of his tender  
“ mercies do we feel! Are we not as unwilling many  
“ times to begin, and as glad to make an end, as if in



“ saying, *call upon me*, he had set us a very burthensome  
“ task? It may seem somewhat extreme, which I will  
“ speak; therefore let every one judge of it, even as  
“ his own heart shall tell him, and no otherwise; I  
“ will but only make a demand:—If God should yield  
“ unto us, not as unto Abraham, If fifty, forty,  
“ thirty, twenty, yea, or if ten good persons could be  
“ found in a city, for their sakes that city should not  
“ be destroyed: but, and if he should make us an  
“ offer thus large; search all the generations of men,  
“ since the fall of our father Adam, find *one* man  
“ that hath done *one* action, which hath past from him  
“ pure, without any stain or blemish at all, for that  
“ *one man's only action* neither man nor angel shall  
“ feel the torments which are prepared for both. Do  
“ you think that this ransom, to deliver men and  
“ angels, could be found to be among the sons of  
“ men? The best things which we do have somewhat  
“ in them to be pardoned. How then can we do any  
“ thing meritorious, or worthy to be rewarded?  
“ Indeed, God doth liberally promise whatsoever ap-  
“ pertaineth to a blessed life, to as many as *sincerely*  
“ keep his law, though they be not *exactly* able to  
“ keep it. Wherefore, we acknowledge a dutiful  
“ necessity of doing well; but *the meritorious dignity*  
“ *of doing well we utterly renounce*. We see how far  
“ from the perfect righteousness of the law; the little  
“ fruit which we have in holiness, it is, God knoweth,  
“ corrupt and unsound: we put no confidence at all  
“ in it, we challenge nothing in the world for it, we

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“dare not call God to reckoning, as if we had him in our debt books: our continual suit to him is, and must be, to bear with our infirmities, and pardon our offences.” (x)

But many will say in opposition to all this, ‘We admit the fact of the great, though not universal, wickedness that prevails in the world; but we cannot assent to what you give as the *Natural History* of it. We do not think it inseparable from man’s present nature, but an accidental acquisition; we do not ascribe it to the influence of an hereditary taint, but conceive it to be the effect of imitation and custom, of acquired habit, of corrupt example, of injudicious tuition.’ This, by the way, is only saying in other words, that depravity is the effect of depravity. Let us, however, examine the matter a little more closely. That vile passions may in some be the result of improper tuition or of imitation, I have no inclination to deny; but they cannot always be referred to such an origin. How often do we see children in their veriest infancy exhibit strong and unquestionable indications of boisterous tempers, of obstinacy, or impatience? How often do children of the most pious parents, who are so brought up as

(x) Hooker’s Discourse on Justification, § 7. See also the sections on the “corrupt nature of man,” in Platon’s Summary of Christian Divinity, published in Pinkerton’s Present State of the Greek church in Russia, an interesting, instructive, and valuable work just published (1814); and which exhibits (with only two or three exceptions) as simple, perspicuous, and correct a picture of Christian doctrines and duties, as any work I ever perused.

during the first six or seven years of their lives, never to witness any species of crime, any instances of ingratitude, of falsehood, or deception, or any indulgence in irascible passions, furnish painful proofs that they can be deceivers, wilful liars, ungrateful, passionate, malignant, and unforgiving? These instances, I will venture to say, occur very frequently when it is impossible to ascribe them to imitation. But suppose the contrary were admitted, the opposers of the scriptural doctrine would gain nothing by the concession. For of whom could a child acquire iniquity by imitation, but of some one who was born before him? And whom did that person imitate, but some one born before *him*? And where must this series terminate? If you say any where short of the first man, you have to account for the remarkable phenomenon of sin's making its first inroad at the identical time, and fixing upon the identical person, you have selected; and this will be found infinitely more difficult than extending the series to the great progenitors of the human race. Besides, does not the very circumstance of an aptitude to imitate evil, and rather to imitate evil than good, indicate something like that hereditary taint, which it is brought forward to contravene and supersede? Can an inherent tendency to imitate evil, an undeviating propensity to slide into vice, (unless the strong hand of moral discipline, or the suasive influence of Divine grace, prevents,) be fairly or rationally ascribed to any thing less than such a cause as that with which the Bible

makes us acquainted? Pursuing this train, you will see that the Scriptural solution of the difficulty before us is *reasonable*; and that it has the farther advantage of showing, that moral evil was not, as some have been presumptuous enough to assert, produced by the Creator, but contracted by the creature, who, though he was endowed with "power to stand, " was free to fall." (y)

Sceptical writers, who are solicitous either to destroy or diminish the authority of the sacred records, have usually selected three points at which to attack the Mosaic account of the Fall of Man. 1st. They ask, why was so strange an act of obedience as that

(y) Let it be recollected, however, that though our defection is a necessary consequence of the fall of our first parents, it by no means follows that if they had continued upright, ~~we~~ we should. The notion of a covenant "that Adam should *stand* as well as fall " for himself and his posterity," appears to me totally unsupported by Scripture. We obviously suffer by his fall; and, if he had stood we might have been benefited by it in some way: yet, some of his progeny, we know not how early or how late, might, by virtue of their freedom, have introduced sin and all its miserable attendants into the world. In this view it would rather seem that the fall of the *first* pair was a benefit to mankind: because the partial though extensive introduction of sin, might have caused many to perish irretrievably, there being no provision for their escape; whereas the foreseen universality of the disorder led, in the exuberance of the Divine mercy, to the gracious plan which furnishes us with a universal and all-sufficient remedy. But on such a topic it behoves us to speak with reverence: I have ventured simply to suggest this thought, because I have found it tend to remove from the minds of well-disposed but undecided men, one of their greatest objections to the doctrine of "the fall."

of refraining from eating a particular fruit, exacted of Adam and Eve? 2dly. How could eating that fruit destroy the perfection of their nature, and entail guilt and misery upon themselves and their latest posterity? 3dly. Why should the *earth* be cursed for the transgression of man?

Supposing we were not able to furnish satisfactory answers to these questions, that circumstance would not justify any person in withholding his assent to the portion of sacred history to which they relate. "*Secret things belong unto God:*" and though he has been graciously pleased to reveal to us every thing essential to our well-being here, and that is calculated to invite and draw us to eternal felicity hereafter, we have no reason to expect that all the questions, doubts, and speculations, which might be started by ingenious men should be cleared up by immediate revelation. When an apostle indulged in useless inquiries, the reply of his Master was, "What is that to thee? follow thou me;" (x) and if Jesus were speaking to many querists in our days, he might employ similar language. The difficulties, however, to which the present questions relate are by no means insurmountable. To the first it may be replied, that none but God can be absolutely independent: that dependance in a creature, without some criterion or test of that dependance, is unintelligible, or, in truth, a contradiction, because it would in such case become

(x) John, xxi, 22.

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with regard to that creature a state of independence; that in a free and rational creature this test of dependance should be such as would often remind him of his dependance, and lead him to acknowledge it; that this acknowledgement could only be by obedience, that is, by some restraint of natural liberty; that the first and only man and woman upon earth *could* not be guilty of any of the crimes which arise from the connexion of human beings with society,—were safely prevented, by mutual affection, from committing any crime, with regard to each other,—and could therefore only sin by infringing upon the obedience due to their Maker: and, since some restraint of natural liberty was necessary, and some permanent and visible memorial of man's dependance upon his Creator beneficial, what could be more proper and easy than a restraint of his appetite from *one* fruit, amidst an infinite variety of others equally delicious? what more worthy the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being, than the prohibition of a fruit which He knew would be injurious to man? what more kind and merciful than the placing the dangerous and prohibited object (expressly prohibited *because* it was dangerous) in so conspicuous a situation as to preclude the possibility of its being mistaken for any other?

The cavil about this fruit's being an object of temptation, is almost too idle to deserve specific notice; for surely no being can be out of the reach of temptation but God alone. The same may be said respecting the puerile objection founded on the supposed

disproportion between the crime and the punishment. “Was man and his posterity to incur death for eating an apple?” No. But who ever said this was the case? The sin consisted not simply in eating the fruit, but in *breaking the commandment of God* by so doing.

With regard to the second question, it may be simply necessary to remind the querist, that even now there are fruits, the eating of which will destroy the best bodily and mental constitution upon earth, will inflame the blood, cause frenzies, and in many cases idiotism. Might not, then, some such fruit as now produces these deleterious effects upon the human constitution, operate most unfavourably upon those of our first parents? Might it not in consequence of its previously endowed properties, ordained for a specific purpose, sow the seeds of disorder and death in their mortal frames,—weaken the energy of their minds, and reduce their god-like understandings to the present standard of ordinary men? Might it not destroy the just equilibrium of their powers, and render passion no longer subordinate to reason,—thus occasioning guilt, misery, disease,—and (since man can, by a necessity of his nature, only produce his like) entailing these upon their posterity to the latest ages?—If there be any thing unreasonable in these admissions, I confess I am unable to detect it.

As to the circumstance included in the third question, it was clearly the effect of mercy, not of relentless fury, as the inquiry usually implies. When man



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by his folly and disobedience had contracted a mortal disease, and had merely the power of communicating to his children that “life” which “is nothing but their *death begun*,” surely it was the height of mercy in an insulted God, to take away *some* of its allurements and fascinations from a world which man *must* quit, —to make the earth the scene of troubles and disquietude, as soon as life became temporary,—that when this was no longer his home, it should no longer be supremely desirable: at the same time graciously assuring the offender, that more than what he had lost by transgression might be regained by repentance, and “turning unto God;” that thus, though

—————“ Blooming Eden withers in his sight,  
 “ Death gives him more than was in Eden lost.” YOUNG.

Some persons, and (as I have already hinted) even some Divines, whose minds lean towards the Socinian (*a*) hypothesis, contend that the whole story of the

(*a*) I do not wish to give any offence by employing the term *Socinian*. in this place; but I am really unable to find any other word that will be both appropriate and distinctive, when applied to the class of Theologians to whom I now refer: and I am not aware that the use of it occasions any doctrine to be ascribed to them which they do not hold. It is not at all essential to our present purpose, to inquire in what minute particulars the opinions of Faustus Socinus differed from those of his uncle Lælius, or in what respects the modern Socinians differ from either: all of them differ from other Christians, by denying the doctrines of original sin, of imputed righteousness, and of Christ’s divinity. To call them by

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fall of man is *allegorical*. To this it is easy to reply by many obvious arguments. The Scriptures are in-

the name *Unitarian*, is to give them a name comparatively new, and to concede them a term which they have often unfairly turned against us; although they know that every firm believer in the doctrine of the Trinity as much abhors the notion of a plurality of Gods as they do. Besides, they generally include under the appellation *Unitarian* the *Arians*, who hold at least *two* doctrines essentially distinct from theirs, namely, that of a propitiation for sin, and that of the divinity of Christ in *some* sense. If this sense, whatever it be, is not equivalent to Christ's being the supreme and only God, the holders of it are in theory Polytheists; and therefore can no more be classed with the Socinian believers in the Unity of God, than with the Trinitarian asserters of the same great truth.

[*Addition to the 3d Edition.*] MR. FULLAGAR, who has honoured me with a pamphlet on the subject of this note, and two or three other gentlemen whom I really esteem, wish me to employ the term *Unitarian* instead of *Socinian*. I am sorry to say that their reasonings and observations have rather strengthened than weakened my objections to the term they request me to adopt. I have told them that if they will present me with *any* term that will be universally admitted as designating the sect, and not in great measure assume the truth of their own system, I will gladly adopt it; but they decline complying with this proposal.

On cool, mature, and conscientious deliberation, I can think of no correct method of employing the word *Unitarian* in this controversy, but what would, I fear, give these gentlemen greater offence than the term *Socinian*. It would, for example, be used correctly to designate a class of unbelievers:—*Unitarian Unbelievers*, persons who loudly profess their belief in one God, who believe also, that great part of the New Testament was written by the apostles; yet do not therefore believe it *true*. Unbelievers in general deny the truth of Revealed Religion *in toto*; Unitarian unbelievers deny the truth of all which does not accord with their own theory. They do not deny that the apostles taught that Jesus Christ, is “ God

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tended to lead us into all truth, to preserve us from all error. But will this be effected by thrusting an allegory into the midst of an important, interesting, and remarkably simple narration, and not furnishing us with the least clue by which we can ascertain where the allegory is interposed between the links of the history? Besides, if the fall of man be allegorical, does it not follow as a necessary consequence, that the redemption of man is allegorical also? for “*as in Adam*” “*all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*” (*b*) Yet every well-regulated mind revolts from so strange an inference. Again, if the fall of man be allegorical, it follows, by parity of reason, that its effects are allegorical, and the effects of the curse denounced in consequence of that fall are allegorical likewise. How has it happened, then, that moral

“over all, blessed for evermore,” that he died “a sacrifice for sin,” “the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God,” that we are “redeemed by the precious blood of Christ,” or that it is “by grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;” but they deny the *truth* of these doctrines, notwithstanding the apostles taught them. That is, they believe that they themselves know more of the nature of true religion, than the apostles who were inspired to teach it. Admirable humility!

Whether the majority of modern Socinians do or do not belong to this class of speculators, I have no inclination to determine. But *if they do*, I may then add, that unless belief retain all, or nearly all, the essential characteristics of unbelief; and unless true religion be that which, among all known religions professing to regard a Revelation, approximates most nearly to infidelity in its nature and tendencies, *modern Socinianism cannot be the true religion.*

(*b*) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

turpitude has been traced every where, and in all ages? for we have seen that the hypothesis which imputes it to imitation is untenable. And how can it be that the curse should have been always so astonishingly fulfilled, as I showed in the first letter I wrote to you? What besides the female of the human species has “sorrow” during pregnancy,—has, as Aristotle long ago remarked, head-achs, vertigos, faintings, loathings, and a sad train of concomitants? What animal besides man is compelled by nature to “labour” for necessities, and even for knowledge. Quadrupeds graze the turf untilled, drink at an unbrewed stream, sleep on a bed prepared for them by their Creator, are clothed with a garment as durable as themselves, find a paradise in every field, and possess by instinct a knowledge perfect in its kind, needing no cultivation: while man, the “Lord” of these animals, can neither eat, drink, sleep, nor be clothed, but in consequence of labour; obtains his knowledge by an effort, greater, and more continuous, than all others; and, after all, does not reach the wine in the goblet, but sips merely the dew from the outside,—refreshing, it is true, but never *filling*. Call all this, as Moses authorizes you to do, the result of just punishment, and every thing is plain and easy: deny the fall of man, its permanent effects upon mankind in the tendency to sin, the maladies attending pregnancy, and the necessity for labour, and you *must* then be precipitated into the conclusion, that because “Man is “unhappy, God is unjust.”

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There are those, I am aware, who not only refuse their assent to the doctrine of the fall of man, but who advance still farther in the same train of sentiment, and affirm most positively that the notion of the universal depravity of human nature is incompatible with the general tenour and language of the Bible. Let us see how far an unstrained abstract of the sentiments of the principal Scripture-writers, as to this particular, will tend to confirm this assertion.

MOSES gives us the result of the observation of Deity, and not of a fallible man, when he says, “ God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every imagination* of the thoughts of his heart was only *evil* CONTINUALLY.” And again, *after* the Deluge, “ The Lord said, The imagination of man’s heart is *evil* from his youth.” (b)

The language of the PSALMIST, descriptive of himself and of all men in his time, is not less decisive. “ Men are *corrupt*; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good. They are *all* gone aside: they are altogether become filthy: there is *none* that doeth good, *no not one*.” “ I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” “ If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, *who* shall stand?” “ In thy sight shall *no man living* be justified.” (c)

Job’s reprover, ELIPHAZ, inquires, “ What is

(b) Gen. vi. 5. viii. 21.

(c) Ps. xiv. 1. 3. li. 5. cxxx. 3. cxlii. 2.

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“ man that *he* should be clean; and one born of a  
 “ woman that *he* should be righteous? How abomi-  
 “ nable and filthy is man, which *drinketh iniquity like*  
 “ *water!* ” (d)

SOLOMON says, “ The way of man is froward and  
 “ strange.” “ There is not a just man *upon earth*,  
 “ that doeth good and sinneth not.” “ God made  
 “ man upright; but they have sought out many in-  
 “ ventions.” “ The heart of the sons of men is fully  
 “ set in them to do evil.” “ Their heart is *full of*  
 “ *evil*, and madness is in their heart while they  
 “ live.” (e)

The language used by ISAIAH, when influenced by  
 the Spirit of prophecy, is, “ Thy first father hath  
 “ sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed. *All we*  
 “ *like sheep, have gone astray: the Lord hath laid on*  
 “ *him the iniquity of us all.*” “ We are *all* as a  
 “ polluted thing, and all our righteous deeds are as a  
 “ rejected garment, and our sins, like the wind, have  
 “ borne us away.” (f)

JEREMIAH says, “ We have sinned against the  
 “ Lord our God, *we and our fathers*, from our youth  
 “ even unto this day.” “ The heart is *deceitful above*  
 “ *all things*, and *desperately wicked*: who can know  
 “ it?” (g)

MICAH, in like manner, affirms, “ There is *none*

(d) Job, xv. 14. 16.

(e) Prov. xxi. 8. Eccles. vii. 20. 29. viii. 11. ix. 3.

(f) Is. xliii. 27. liii. 6. lxiv. 6. Lowth.

(g) Jer. iii. 25. xvii. 9.

“upright among men;” (*h*) and similar language might be quoted from other of the minor prophets.

The New Testament abounds with declarations equally express and decisive. Thus, JESUS CHRIST himself in his conference with Nicodemus, assumes the fact, that the whole world has sinned, (*i*) and soon after affirms, that, “Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

The apostle PETER, on the day of Pentecost, after he had received the Spirit which should “lead him into all truth,” said, not to a select party of great sinners, but to a promiscuous multitude of “Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Egyptians, Cyreneans, Romans, Cretes, Arabians, Jews, and Proselytes,”—“Repent, and let *every one* of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” (*k*) A plain proof that, in the estimation of this inspired apostle, *every one* of them had sins to be remitted.

The epistles of PAUL are full of passages of the same import. I select the following. When reasoning upon the general subject, but speaking of *himself*

(*h*) Mic. vii. 2.

(*i*) John, iii. 16. 19.

(*k*) Acts, ii. 38. I have here quoted from the translation of the New Testament, published in 1808, under the patronage and authority of the Socinians and I shall continue to do thus, whenever the quotation is intended to establish any doctrinal point which they dispute; unless I conceive their translation erroneous, and in such cases shall specify my reasons for not adopting that version.



as if to avoid giving offence, he says: "I know that  
 " in me, that is, *in my flesh*, dwelleth *no good thing*."  
 Again: "Jews and Gentiles are *all* under sin."  
 " *All* have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."  
 " Death hath passed upon all men, inasmuch as *all* have  
 " sinned." " By the disobedience of one, *the many*  
 " were made sinners." " The Scripture hath in-  
 " cluded *all together* under sin, that the promise, by  
 " faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who  
 " believe." *All* of us likewise lived " formerly in the  
 " desires of our flesh, &c.; and were *by nature* chil-  
 " dren of anger, even as others." " If one died for  
 " all, then were *all* in a state of death." (l)

JAMES, who is generally imagined to dwell less  
 upon the peculiarities of the Christian system, than  
 the other apostles, says, " In *many* things we *all*  
 " offend." (m)

The apostle JOHN says, " If we say that we have *no*  
 " sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."  
 " Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins; and  
 " not for ours only, but for the *whole world*." " The  
 " *whole world* lieth (in wickedness, or lieth) in subjec-  
 " tion to the evil one." (n)

Now, my friend, examine the passages here cited  
 attentively, compare them with their respective con-

(l) Rom. vii. 17. iii. 9. 23. v. 12. 19. Gal. iii. 22. Ephes. ii. 3.  
 2 Cor. v. 14. Tit. iii. 3.

(m) James, iii. 2.

(n) 1 John, i. 8. ii. 2. v. 19: ο κόσμος ολος εν τω πονερω κειται.  
 Mundus totus in maligno positus est. LEUSD.

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texts, to ascertain that they contain the genuine sentiments of the several writers; and then devise, if you can, any means by which I could offer a greater insult to your understanding than by saying, as those from whose sentiments I wish to preserve you are often saying, ‘Hence you may safely infer, that the doctrine of the depravity of human nature is not supported by Scripture.’

Indeed, it seems next to impossible to deny this doctrine, without at the same time impugning the wisdom of God, as manifested in the economy of redemption. In this there is an amazing apparatus, for which, upon the hypothesis of our opponents, there can be no necessity: for there certainly can be no necessity that “Christ should die for all,” if *all* have not sinned. According to this scheme, every human creature must be born of “God,” “be created anew,” “be quickened,” “be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ,” “be washed from his sins in His blood.” Here, therefore, are requirements and provisions where none are needed, if the doctrine of human depravity be unfounded. God, who alone can see and provide for future contingencies, has fancied there would be a universal apostasy when there has been no such thing,—foretold by his prophets, that he would provide a way for the restoration of his people, when no restoration was required,—appointed a Saviour to die for the sins of the whole world, and whose “blood” was to wash away the sins of many who had no sin to be thus

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cancelled. And this, even this, is called "*rational religion*;" a religion that evidences the wisdom and goodness of God, conformably to the most liberal, and pure, and philosophical principles!

"Shall we then continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Though the powers of man are vitiated, and his inclinations to evil are so strong that they will never be thoroughly subdued but by Divine influences; yet God, who cannot be otherwise than holy, continues still to demand a perfection of obedience. Ours is a *moral* inability to fulfil the Law; but he who knows the heart can, and has graciously promised he will, ultimately destroy this inability, by communications from himself. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." Though we cannot of ourselves fulfil what God requires in his Law, yet we "can do all things through Christ, who dwelleth in us." If we "live according to the flesh, we *must* die hereafter: but if through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live." (o) God condescends, by the dispensation of the Gospel, to pardon and accept the humble, sincere, penitent sinner, on account of the perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice of his own Son, who died to deliver his people from the *power* of sin, as well as from the *punishment* due to it. The promises of the New Dispensation relate as well to the recovery of the Divine *image*, as the recovery of

(o) Rom. viii. 12.

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the divine *favour*. On both these accounts we are solicited to come to Christ “that we may have life.” The invitations of the Gospel are free and open to *all*: yet, this should not cause us to sink into supineness, or to treat the invaluable gift with indifference; for the blessings of redemption are restricted to penitent believers, and to them alone.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XIV.

*On the Atonement for Sin, by the Death of Jesus Christ.*

“ GOD hath so loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but enjoy everlasting life.” (p) Such is the remarkable language of the

(p) John, iii. 16. When reflecting upon this text, and many others in the New Testament, it has often occurred to me that it would be extremely difficult to defend either our Lord or his apostles from the charge of egregious trifling upon the most solemn subjects, according to that interpretation of Christianity which denies the extent of human depravity, and the doctrine of Christ’s divinity. Thus, in the case before us, a Jewish Ruler, convinced that Jesus Christ was “ a teacher sent from God,” solicited a conference with him. In the course of it, this Jew hesitated much at the doctrine of regeneration; but his teacher prepared his mind for still more extraordinary discoveries of divine truth, by saying, “ If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” What, then, is the mysterious truth for which the mind of Nicodemus was thus prepared? Why, that “ God so loved the world as to send ” a *good man* into it! That is, to send a good man as an example to a world that already contained many good men, and to give unto those good men eternal life! Or, “ God so loved the world as to give,” not his Son by nature, but by adoption and elevation from a state of wretchedness and poverty, to inexpressible glory at his own right hand!! Who would ever extol so wonderfully, the clemency of a monarch that should pretend to give his *own son* to die for rebels, and instead of so doing should adopt one of the most indigent and wretched of his subjects for that purpose? So again, the language

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great Head of the Church, concerning himself. It is important for us to determine the precise meaning of this proposition; and therefore to inquire whether we believe in him when we consider him as one who came merely to teach us and to set us an example, or when we farther regard him as one who died *a sacrifice for sin*?

To me it appears that the latter is the correct interpretation of the passage: and that, therefore, though the preaching of “Christ crucified was unto the Jews” a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks *foolishness*, (q) both in the primitive and most succeeding times, yet it is a genuine and awfully momentous Christian doctrine, that Christ by his death has made *atonement* or *satisfaction* for the sins of all those who truly repent, and return unto God in the way of sincere though imperfect obedience.

This great truth (for such I doubt not you will find it to be) has been believed and defended by good men in all ages. Among the Christians of the earliest times, we have, first, *Clemens Romanus* (whose first

of the apostle to Timothy, “Without controversy *great is the mystery of Godliness*, God was manifested in the flesh,” has an intelligible and important meaning, if it signify that the Divine nature was mysteriously united to human nature in the person of Jesus Christ. But deprive the passage of this interpretation, and give it that of the Socinians, and you cannot, I think, conceive any thing more puerile: “Without controversy great is the mystery of sending a good man into the world, to be seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, and justified by the Spirit,” when he needed no justification.

(q) 1 Cor. i. 23.

epistle even Mr. Belsham commends) saying, “ Let  
 “ us look stedfastly to the *Blood* of Christ, and see  
 “ how precious it is in the sight of God; which,  
 “ being *shed for our salvation*, has obtained the grace  
 “ of repentance for all the world.” And again, “ By  
 “ the blood of our Lord there shall be redemption  
 “ to all that believe and hope in God.” (r) *Ignatius*,  
 also, in his epistle to the Smyrnæans, says, “ Now  
 “ all these things *he suffered for us*, that we might be  
 “ saved. And he suffered *truly*, as he also truly raised  
 “ up himself: and not, as some unbelievers say, that  
 “ he only *seemed to suffer*.” (s)

POLYCARP, again, in his epistle to the Philippians,  
 quotes 1 Pet. ii. 22—24, in proof of the doctrine of  
 Christ’s atonement; adding, “ He suffered all this  
 “ *for us*, that we might live through him.” And in  
 the account given of his martyrdom by the church at  
 Smyrna over which he presided, they speak of it as  
 an indisputable Christian sentiment, that “ Christ  
 “ suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be  
 “ saved throughout the whole world, *the righteous*  
 “ *for the ungodly*.” (t)

Let it be recollected that unless this be a true doc-  
 trine of Christianity, Ignatius and Polycarp are not,  
 in the restricted sense of the word, *martyrs*; and far-  
 ther, that in the case of Polycarp, at whose mar-  
 tyrdom a miracle was wrought, if the doctrine of the

(r) Clem. Ep. ad. Corint § 7, 12.

(s) Ignat. Ep. ad. Smyrn. § 2.

(t) Pol. Ep. ad. Phil. § 8. Pol. Mart. § 17.



atonement is *erroneous*, God permitted a miracle to be wrought, or rather, wrought a miracle, in attestation of a false doctrine, and caused many *thereby* to be seduced into error.

It would be easy to quote pages from Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and the succeeding fathers, in favour of the atonement; but, for the sake of brevity, I shall cite only one more passage, and that from a work of acknowledged antiquity, the *Apostolical Constitutions*, most probably compiled in the third century. In the fine prayer given in the Liturgy for the Eucharist, we read, "He was pleased by thy good will to become man, who was man's Creator; to be under the laws, who was the Legislator; *to be a sacrifice*, who was an High Priest; and reconciled thee to the world, and freed all men from the wrath to come." "He that was the Saviour was condemned; he that was impassable was nailed to the cross; he who was by nature immortal died, and he that is the giver of life was buried, that he might loose those for whose sake he came, from suffering and death." (v)

Descending to later times we find the same doctrine maintained as essential, in the Greek and in most of the reformed churches. It is clearly stated by the venerable fathers of the English church, and by many of the most profound, eloquent, and learned of the episcopal clergy. To prove this the three following quotations may suffice.

(v) Const. Apost. lib. viii. cap. 12.

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“ We are all miserable persons, sinful persons, damnable persons, justly driven out of Paradise, justly excluded from heaven, justly condemned to hell-fire: and yet (see a wonderful token of God’s love) he gave us his only begotten Son, us, I say, that were his extreme and deadly enemies, that we, *by virtue of his blood shed upon the cross*, might be cleansed from our sins, and might become righteous again in his sight.” (w)

“ In correspondence to all the exigencies of the case (that God and man both might act their parts in saving us), the blessed eternal Word, the only Son of God, by the good-will of his Father, did vouchsafe to intercede for us, and to undertake our redemption: in order thereto voluntarily being sent down from heaven, assuming human flesh, subjecting himself to all the infirmities of our frail nature, and to the worst inconveniences of our low condition; therein meriting God’s favour to us, by a perfect obedience to the law, and satisfying God’s justice by a most patient endurance of pains in our behalf; in completion of all, willingly laying down his life *for the ransom of our souls, and pouring forth his blood in sacrifice for our sins.*” (x)

“ In what particular way the blood of Christ had this efficacy there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain: but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to

(w) Second Homily on the Passion. See also Art. 31.

(x) Dr. Isaac Barrow’s Sermon on the Passion.

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“ be very much in the dark, concerning the manner  
“ in which the ancients understood atonement to be  
“ made, i. e. pardon to be obtained by sacrifices.  
“ And, if the Scripture has, as surely it has, left  
“ this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious,  
“ left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about  
“ it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least  
“ uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain  
“ for want of farther information, unless he can show  
“ his claim to it.

“ Some have endeavoured to explain the efficacy  
“ of what Christ has done and suffered for us, be-  
“ yond what the Scripture has authorized. Others,  
“ probably because they could not explain it, have  
“ been for taking it away, and confining his office,  
“ as Redeemer of the world, to his instruction, ex-  
“ ample, and government of the church. Whereas  
“ the doctrine of the Gospel appears to be, not only  
“ that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but ren-  
“ dered it of the efficacy which it is, by what he did  
“ and suffered for us: that he obtained for us the  
“ benefit of having our repentance accepted unto  
“ eternal life: not only that he revealed to sinners,  
“ that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how  
“ they might obtain it; but moreover that he put  
“ them into this capacity of salvation, by what *he*  
“ *did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of*  
“ *escaping future punishment, and obtaining future*  
“ *happiness.* And it is our wisdom thankfully to  
“ accept the benefit, by performing the conditions

“ upon which it is offered, on our part, without disputing how it was procured on his.” (y)

In a question of such moment, however, you will naturally look for something higher than human authority. I shall, therefore, endeavour to convince you from Scripture that *Christ died a sacrifice for sin*; and the evidences I shall adduce will be partly typical, partly prophetical, partly historical, and partly declaratory.

First, then, with regard to the typical evidences of the doctrine of the atonement, besides the practice of sacrifices in general, we have them in several persons and various observances. Thus, we have an express representation of Christ in the brazen serpent in the wilderness, by *looking* upon which the people were cured of the wounds inflicted by the fiery serpents. So, in looking upon Christ by faith, the sting of “ that Old Serpent the devil ” is taken away. The lifting up of the brazen serpent typified the lifting up of Christ upon the cross. This is no fanciful interpretation of mine; our Lord himself makes the allusion. “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that every one who believeth in him may not perish, but have everlasting life.” (z)

Another lively representation of Christ’s bearing our sins, and taking them away from us, was exhibited in the custom relative to the *scape-goat*. (a)

(y) Butler’s Analogy, part ii. ch. 5. (z) John, iii. 14, 15.

(a) Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

There was also a standing and continual representation of him appointed, in the person of the high priest, under the Law; who, entering into the Holy of Holies once a year with the blood of the great expiatory sacrifice, and *he only*, to make atonement for sin, did thus represent in a lively manner our great High Priest entering into heaven, once for all, with his own blood to expiate the sins of the whole world. This again is not an imaginary interpretation, but is largely insisted upon by the apostle Paul. (*b*)

Our deliverance by the death of Christ is typified again in that ordinance of the Law, that the manslayer who fled to one of the cities of refuge should not come out thence till the death of the high priest, and no satisfaction be taken till then; and then he should be acquitted, and “return into the land of his possession.” (*c*)

But the most remarkable type of the atonement of Jesus Christ is the sacrifice of the *paschal Lamb*, in correspondence with which “Christ our Passover” is sacrificed in our stead.” (*d*) Justin Martyr, in his conference with Trypho the Jew, evinces from the Scriptures, and the nature of this rite, that it was a type of Christ crucified for the sins of the world. One curious circumstance which he notices, without any contradiction from his learned opponent, is this: “The paschal lamb (says he) which

(*b*) Heb. vii. viii. ix. x.

(*c*) Num. xxxv. 6, 25—28.

(*d*) 1 Cor v. 7. το πασχα ημων υπερ ημων εθουθη, Χριστος.

“ was to be entirely roasted, was a symbol of the  
 “ punishment of the cross, which was inflicted on  
 “ Christ: for the lamb which was roasted was so  
 “ placed as to resemble *the figure of a cross*: with  
 “ one spit it was pierced longitudinally, from the  
 “ tail to the head; with another it was transfixed  
 “ through the shoulders, so that the fore legs became  
 “ *extended.*” (e) The same learned apologist has  
 another passage still more extraordinary, in relation  
 to this ceremony. The Jews, he affirms, expunged  
 passages from their sacred writings which bore tes-  
 timony to the vicarious sufferings and death of Jesus  
 Christ, and among them the following: When Ezra  
 celebrated the passover (as is related Ezra, ch. vi.  
 19, &c.) Justin says he spoke thus:—“ And Ezra  
 “ spoke unto the people, and said, This Passover  
 “ is our *Saviour* and our *Refuge*: and if ye shall un-  
 “ derstand and ponder it in your hearts, that we  
 “ shall afflict *him* for a sign; and if afterwards we  
 “ shall believe on *him*, this place shall not be deso-  
 “ lated for ever, saith the Lord of hosts. But if  
 “ ye will not believe on *him*, nor hear *his* preaching,  
 “ ye shall be a laughing-stock to the Gentiles.” This,  
 Justin asserts, the Jews blotted from the Septuagint  
 translation; and if so, they took care to expunge it  
 from the Hebrew likewise; for, at present, it exists  
 in neither. (f) Another circumstance connected with  
 the passover is recorded in the Mishna. After the

(e) Just. Martyri Opera ab Oberthur. vol. ii. p. 106.

(f) Ibid. p. 196.

blood was sprinkled, the lamb was hung up and flayed. This *hanging up* was deemed so essential a part of the ceremony, that if there was no convenience to suspend the lamb, two men standing with their hands on each other's shoulders had the lamb suspended from their arms till the skin was taken off. (g) These are manifestly typical of Christ's crucifixion and sacrifice.

In the second place let me point to the prophetical evidence of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. "Those things, (says Peter,) which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled." (h) Numerous are the passages in the prophecies which declare that the Messiah should suffer; but the only ones I now recollect which declare *why* he should suffer, are given by Isaiah and Daniel; they are, however, quite sufficient for our present purpose:

"Surely our infirmities he hath borne:

"And our sorrows he hath carried them."

"He was wounded for *our* transgressions;

"Was smitten for *our* iniquities:

"The chastisement by which *our* peace is effected was laid upon him;

"And by his bruises *we* are healed."

"Jehovah hath made *to light upon him the iniquity of us all.*"

"For the transgression of my people he was smitten to death."

"Although he had done no wrong,

"Neither was there any guile in his mouth;

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction."

"Of the travail of his soul he shall see, and be satisfied:

(g) Dr. A. Clarke on the Eucharist, p. 35. (h) Acts, iii. 18.



“ By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify many ;

“ For the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.”

“ He poured out his soul unto death ;

“ And was numbered with the transgressors ;

“ And he bare the sin of the many ;

“ And made intercession for the transgressors.” (i)

To the same effect Daniel predicts that the “ Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself; but to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” (i)

By historical evidence that Christ died as a sacrifice for sin, which I intended to produce in the third place, I mean especially that which arises from the consideration of his mental “ agony ” previously to his crucifixion, and at that solemn event. When he was at Gethsemane the evening on which he was betrayed, the evangelist Matthew says, he “ began to be very sorrowful and full of anguish, and said to his disciples, My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death.” (k) Mark, in like manner, says, “ he began to be greatly astonished, and to be full of anguish.” (l) Indeed the original language employed by Mark conveys a stronger sense than that in this translation for *εκθαμβεῖσθαι* imports the most shocking mixture of terror and amazement; and *περιλυπος*, in the next verse, intimates that he felt on every side surrounded with sorrow. While thus “ drinking of the

(i) Lowth's Isaiah, liii. 4—6. 8—12. Dan. ix. 24, 26. See also Zechariah xiii. 1, where, though the name of the Messiah does not appear, the language is very expressive and fully to the purpose.

(k) Matt. xxvi. 37, 38.

(l) Mark, xiv. 33.

“brook by the way,” (*m*) *thrice* did he pray to his Father to “take away the bitter cup,” and though it was in the cool of the evening, “the sweat” occasioned by the agony of his mind “was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (*n*) And when hanging on the cross, his piteous and heart-rending exclamation, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (*o*) doubtless arose from the want of a comfortable sense of God’s presence.

Now whence arose this agony and this interruption of the sense of God’s presence, during our Lord’s great extremity, but from the necessity that he should *suffer*? Bodily pain might have been lost in enjoyment, even during crucifixion (as has been manifested in the delights of some martyrs in the midst of their tortures); but in that case the “soul” of the Messiah could not have been “an offering for sin,” as Isaiah predicted it must be. To this end it was that it “pleased Jehovah to *crush him with affliction* :” and it is next to impossible to meditate upon his pathetic exclamations amid his severe sufferings without adopting again the recently quoted language of the same prophet,—

“Surely *OUR infirmities he hath borne*;

“And *OUR sorrows he hath carried* ;”

If this explication be rejected, it is natural to ask upon what principles of equitable retribution, or of

(*m*) Ps. cx. 7.

(*n*) Luke, xxii. 44.

(*o*) Matt. xxvii. 46. On this subject see some very profound and exquisite reflections in Hooker’s Eccles. Polity, lib. v. § 48; p. 202, Ed. of 1666.

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consistency of character, can that extreme anguish be accounted for, which was endured by a pure and perfect being, who had not on his own account “one  
“recollection tinged with remorse, or one anticipa-  
“tion mingled with dread?” This question admits but of a single answer, and that in my estimation a very absurd one: for, to allot a series of exquisite sufferings to an individual who is without sin, and with regard to whom of course they cannot be penal, and at the termination of his life, when they cannot be corrective, merely for the purpose of calling into exercise “patience and resignation,” and *thus* tending to “our benefit and example,” (*p*) is to adopt a mode of government entirely irreconcilable with all “rational” ideas of wisdom and justice, and completely repugnant to every attribute of Deity.

The answer here adverted to, is, moreover, as contrary to matter of fact as it is to reason: for, if the doctrine of *satisfaction* be denied, Jesus Christ did *not* present a splendid example of patience and resignation. Compare his behaviour under suffering with

(*p*) Fellowes’s Theology, vol. i. p. 210. They who assign this reason for our Lord’s sufferings should, before they urge it confidently, free it from an objection advanced by themselves against our opinions. For even this would be to suffer for us,—for our good. If it be *just* in God to permit the innocent to suffer for such an end as this, why should it be *unjust* in him to permit him to suffer for that which we specify as the true cause of his sufferings? “Can it be *just* “in God (asks Mr. Wardlaw) to inflict sufferings on the innocent “for an *inferior* end, and yet *unjust* in him to inflict the same sufferings, on the same person, for an end *obviously and incalculably* “superior?” Sermons, p. 217.

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that of other martyrs, many, for example, in the third century. *He* suffered for the space of a few hours only; *they* were made to sustain sufferings for days, weeks, months, nay, in some cases, years. *He* suffered the punishment of the cross; *they* have agonized under boiling oil, melted lead, plates of hot iron; or have been broiled for *days* over a slow fire, or shut up in fiercely glowing brazen bulls; or have had their members cut and torn off, one after another, in tedious and barbarous succession. Yet *he* lamented, and *they* triumphed. Is not this infinitely astonishing, upon any other theory of religion than ours? Is it not incomprehensible that the Master of our faith, the "Captain of our salvation," should be abashed and astounded at the sight or even the *contemplation* of death, and that his servants and followers should triumph in the midst of unequalled torments? The one is seized with sorrow even unto death; the others are transported with joy. The one sweats as it were drops of blood, at the approach of death; the others behold a divine hand wiping off their blood, but not their *tears*, for none do they shed. The one complains that God forsakes him; the others cry aloud with rapture that they behold Him stretching forth his hands to encourage and invite them to him!

All this cannot be because his bodily torment is greater than theirs; nor can it be, because they have more internal strength and holiness than he has. But it is, because God administers more comfort to them than to him. Yet why so, if Jesus Christ be

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his “Son in whom he is well pleased?” Why, indeed, but because he regards him as *our* pledge, having constituted him “a sin-offering for us?”

Contrast again, the dismal agony of our Lord, with the holy serenity of *Stephen*, or the joyful anticipation of *Ignatius*, or the heroic fortitude of *Blandina*, whose patience outstood the successive labours of a series of tormentors; (q) and then ask—If the approbation of God ordinarily comforts those who suffer for righteousness’ sake, could it not much better have consoled Jesus Christ? If the certainty of possessing an eternal life of bliss makes the martyrs leap with joy and exultation when they are about to lose a temporal life; shall not a like certainty, superadded to that of “finishing the work for which his Father sent “him into the world” fill Jesus with joy, too? Shall men, who are accustomed to love the earth, rejoice to leave it; and shall Jesus Christ, who loves heaven alone, be smitten with a thousand mortal terrors because he is going thither! How truly inexplicable must all this for ever remain, if the orthodox hypothesis be rejected.

Before I produce the fourth class of evidences from the Scripture, or those which are positively declaratory, I request you will bear it in mind, that the New Testament, being intended for universal use, and of course for that of plain unlettered men as well as others, does not deal in logical distinctions and

(q) Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 1.

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metaphysical subtleties, but conveys its momentous truths in the simplest language; and, to rivet them the more firmly upon the mind, often has recourse to a variety of apt and striking metaphors and allusions, to communicate the same general idea. Thus with regard to atonement, and words of analogous import, correct notions may be readily obtained when the different lights in which *sin* is represented are contemplated. If, for example, sin be regarded as a breach of the law, which calls down its curses, and excites God's anger, then an *atonement* (which literally signifies a *covering*) screens from the curses of the law, covers, or appeases, or propitiates the angry countenance of Deity. If sin be that which interrupts the friendship which would otherwise subsist between man and his Maker, then what is needed is something to procure *reconciliation* between the parties at variance. If sin be considered as a *debt* incurred by man, then what he requires is something which will give *satisfaction* for that debt. If sin be depicted as *slavery* to Satan, then the grand requisite is a *ransom*. If sin be described as an *impurity*, then what the sinner needs is something that will *purge* or *wash* it away. All these, and perhaps some other views of sin, its effects, and the means of cancelling them, are included in that *sacrifice* and offering for sin, in consequence of which "iniquity is not imputed, transgression *is forgiven*, and sin *covered*." (r)

These observations being premised, I shall tran-

scribe some passages from the New Testament, in which the doctrine of Jesus Christ's surrendering his life as an atonement for sin is plainly declared, beginning with those that were furnished during his own personal ministry. "The Son of man (says he) came "not to be served, but to serve; and to give his life "a ransom for many." (s) "I lay down *my life* for "the sheep." (t) "The bread which I will give is my "flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (v) And when he instituted the Eucharist, which was expressly intended, not to remind his disciples of the purity of his conduct, or the exemplary holiness of his life, but to "show forth the Lord's *death* till he "come," (w) Judas, (whose sins were *not* to be remitted,) (x) having previously departed, He took bread and brake it, saying, "This is my body, which is "given for you." (y) And taking the cup and blessing it, He said, "Drink ye all out of it: for this is my "blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for "many for the *remission of sins*." (z) Giving to these passages their natural and obvious import, it seems impossible to eradicate the doctrine of the atonement for sin, made by Christ's death, from the minds of plain, humble, sincere Christians, so long as the ordinance of the Eucharist continues to be observed with reference to the time and manner of its institution. I

(s) Matt. xx. 28.

(t) John, x. 15.

(v) John, vi. 51.

(w) 1 Cor. xi. 26.

(x) Matt. xxvi. 24.

(y) Luke, xxii. 19.

(z) Matt. xxvi. 28.



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have not forgotten that a writer of great ingenuity, who seems to have carefully weighed the meaning of all words except those which relate to religious topics, has recently had the boldness to say that, "If the Unitarian Society, on their English Anniversary Festival, were to consecrate the first goblet to the immortal memory of the great founder of their faith, they would more faithfully copy the spirit of his institution than any rival creedsmen, and would accomplish the association of religion with the natural and habitual pleasures of mankind." (a) But this attempt at transmuting the Orgies of Bacchus into a Christian rite, will not succeed with those who have beheld by faith "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." (b) No: "the enemies of this heart-reviving truth might as well hope to pierce through a coat of mail with a straw, as to reach such a truth, defended by such an ordinance as this, by any of their trifling sophistries!" (c)

In showing the opinion of the apostles as to this fundamental point, my business must be selection:

(a) Synonymic Elucidations, in Athenæum, vol. iv. p. 497.—Such of my readers as wish to judge fully of this writer's horrid perversion of terms in allusion to the most solemn of all religious ordinances, may peruse an account of the "Unitarian Tavern Dinner," in Nos. 7, and 8, of the Freethinking Christian's Magazine;—a work to which I should not refer, were it not to show that even Infidels, and they of no common kind, are disgusted that this anniversary revel should be misnamed a religious commemoration.

(b) John, i. 29.

(c) Doddridge's Fam. Expos. note f, on Matt. xxvi.

for no one can read the Epistles without perceiving that the grand object of their authors is to preach “Christ *crucified*,” and that for every reference to the *life* of the Redeemer there may be found at least *ten* triumphant appeals to the benefits resulting from his *death*. Thus St. PAUL: “God forbid (or far be it) “that I should glory, except in the *cross* of our Lord “Jesus Christ.” “Christ our passover is *sacrificed* “*in our stead*.” “Christ died in due season *for* “*the ungodly*: while we were still *sinners* Christ *died* “*for us*.” “Through our Lord Jesus Christ we “have now received the *reconciliation*.” “Ye have “been bought with a *price*.” “Christ died *for our* “*sins*, according to the Scriptures.” “Christ *died* “*for all*, that those who live should no longer live “to themselves, but to him who died and rose again “for them.” “God hath made him who knew no “sin to be a *sin for us*.” Thus “he hath favoured “us through the beloved Son: through whom we “have redemption *by his blood*, even *forgiveness* of “our offences.” “*Reconciling* both unto God in one “body *by the cross*.” “Christ gave himself up *for us*, “an offering and a *sacrifice* to God.” “Christ Jesus “gave himself a *ransom* for all.” “Who gave him- “self *for us* that he might *redeem* us from *all iniquity*.” “Christ by his own *blood* obtained an everlasting “*redemption*.” “Where a covenant is, there is a “necessity for the *death* of that which establishes the “covenant.” “So Christ was *offered* once to bear “*away the sins* of the many.” “He who despised

“ the law of Moses died without mercy : of how  
 “ much greater punishment, think ye, will *he* be  
 “ deemed worthy who hath trodden under foot the  
 “ *Son of God*, and hath counted the *blood of the cove-*  
 “ *nant*, by which he was *sanctified*, an unholy [or un-  
 “ important] thing ? ” (c)

As these texts are of themselves sufficient to establish the point in question, I shall merely quote one or two from the other apostles. PETER, for example, says, “ Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,  
 “ as with silver and gold, from your vain behaviour  
 “ delivered down by your fathers ; but with the pre-  
 “ cious *blood of Christ*, as of a spotless and unblem-  
 “ ished Lamb.” “ Christ suffered for you : ” “ and  
 “ himself *bare our sins* in his own body *on the cross*.”  
 “ Christ suffered once for *sins*, the righteous for the  
 “ unrighteous, that he might *bring us to God*.” And to the same purpose is the language of JOHN : “ The  
 “ blood of Jesus Christ *cleanseth us from all sins*.”  
 “ Jesus Christ is the *propitiation for our sins* ; and not  
 “ for ours only, but also for the whole world.”  
 “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he  
 “ loved us, and sent his Son, to be a *propitiation for*  
 “ *our sins*.” (d)

Surely, if language have any definite meaning,

(c) Gal. vi. 14. 1 Cor. v. 7. Rom. v. 6. 8. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 20. xv. 3. 2 Cor. v. 15. 21. Eph. i. 7. ii. 16. v. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14. Heb. ix. 11. 16. 28. x. 28, 29. See also Heb. ii. 10. & ix. 22.

(d) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ii. 21. 24. iii. 18. 1 John, i. 7. ii. 2. iv. 10. Consult also Rev. i. 5. v. 9. xiii. 8.

these texts declare the innocence of Jesus Christ who suffered, and the iniquities of those for whom he suffered; they declare, that a righteous person died for the guilty, and that thereby the guilty were saved. Hence arises the grand difference between the dispensations of the Law and of Grace. The law requires perfect obedience and satisfaction to be wrought out in our persons: grace allows of the obedience and satisfaction of a substitute. The law makes no allowance for the least failure, but says, "He that offendeth in the least tittle is guilty of all; the soul that sinneth shall *die*:" Grace says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The Law demands sternly, "Pay me that thou owest:" but Grace points to the "hand-writing of ordinances, blotted out and cancelled by the blood of Jesus;" so that we can say, "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed," who manifested his love to his friend Lazarus by his *tears*, and to us by shedding his *blood* for us, *while we were enemies*!

"A truth so strange, 'twere bold to think it true;

"If not far bolder still to disbelieve."

YOUNG.

It is the great glory of the Gospel that it gives such a satisfactory account of the method whereby sin may be pardoned, in a manner consistent with the honours of the Divine government: yet so astonishing and surpassing human expectation is the plan of redemption we are now contemplating, that many, who

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notwithstanding profess themselves Christians, object against it; and that, unfortunately, in a very dogmatical and assuming tone. Thus, Faustus Socinus: —“ If not once only, but *often*, it should be written in “ the Sacred Scriptures, that Christ made satisfaction “ to God for sins, I would not therefore believe it.” And again, “ Any, even the *greatest force* is to be used “ with words, rather than take them in this the ob- “ vious sense.” (e) Sentiments like these, though they seem much more compatible with Deism than with any principles that can be incorporated with the belief that the Scriptures are of Divine authority, are avowed by many of the professors of “ Rational “ Religion ” (as it is often arrogantly called) in the present day. Yet I conceive the difficulties hanging about the subject, and which occasion the adoption of such strong language, may be removed with tolerable facility.

It is asserted for instance, in the first place, that if the doctrine of atonement for sin be true, then, “ since “ it was only obscurely declared by our Lord, he cannot be said to have taught his own religion.” This argument, I think I have already shown in the present letter, cannot very fairly be urged on the present occasion, since the language of our Lord is too unequivocal to be easily misunderstood: yet, as similar reasoning is advanced against other branches of

(e) Socinus on the Satisfaction, and in his 2d Epistle to Balcerimicius.

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Christian doctrine, it at least deserves a specific reply. Let it be observed, then, first, that, as both Macknight and Magee have correctly stated it, "the object of our Saviour's life was to *supply the subject*, "not to *promulgate the doctrines* of the Gospel:" next, that an infidel might, upon the principles here adverted to, deny Christ's Messiahship, and the doctrine of the resurrection; and might ask, Why did not Christ, on his first advent, openly declare that he was the Messiah? Why did not he fully develop the doctrine which Dr. Priestley says it was "the *sole* object of his mission to ascertain and exemplify, namely, that of a resurrection and a future state?" Let it be remarked, farther, that if Christ had publicly and plainly preached the doctrine of the atonement of his death to *all* who heard him, he must of course have predicted openly that he should die as a sacrifice: and this might have provoked the malicious Jews either to kill him before his hour was come, to prevent his teaching, and pretend that they only fulfilled his own prophecy; or to lay hold of him, and keep him a prisoner without killing him, for the purpose of falsifying the prophecies of his death, and making void his doctrine of atonement. (*f*)

(*f*) My ingenious opponent Mr. Fullagar, who selects and criticises my least important arguments, and then exults as though he had refuted the *whole*, (forgetting that it is one thing to break a single palisade on a detached outwork of a fortress, and another to destroy the fortress itself,) asks, "What is this, Sir, but saying that Jesus was *afraid* to reveal an important doctrine, &c." Why,

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Let it be observed again, that many passages in the writings of the evangelists prove decisively that it was not the design of our Lord in his life-time, and indeed “not expedient,” to publish the grace of the Gospel so fully and clearly as it was afterwards to be revealed *to* and *by* his apostles. But shortly before his death he said unto them, “I have still  
“many things to say unto you; but ye *cannot bear*  
“*them now*. However, when he cometh, even the  
“Spirit of truth, he will guide you into *all* truth: for  
“he will not speak of himself; but whatsoever he  
“shall hear he will speak; and he will show you  
“things to come. He will *glorify me*: for he will  
“*receive of mine, and will declare it unto you.*”(g)  
Here, then, the question is simply, Was this prediction accomplished, or was it not? And the only

Sir, it is this; it is saying that he abstained from “casting his  
“pearls before swine” at a time when he *knew* they would trample  
them under foot; or it is amplifying his own language in Matt.  
xxvi. 53, 54. Two pages farther on this gentleman says, “There  
“is no proof that the death of our Lord was a sacrifice, *using that*  
“*term in reference to an act of devotion.*” Here, I would ask, in  
return, what man of common understanding ever so employed the  
term in this connexion? Did not the whole pamphlet contain too  
much of such playing with the subject, my respect for its author  
would have induced me to give it more than this cursory notice;  
especially as I most fervently wish he may enjoy and communicate  
all possible good, and should therefore rejoice to see him devoting  
the leisure and the talents with which God has blessed him, to a  
far nobler and holier cause (at least, in the judgment of prophets,  
apostles, and martyrs) than that which he has espoused.

(g) John, xvi. 13, 14.



answer a consistent believer in the New Testament can give, is, that it was fulfilled in the forty days' communication our Lord had with his disciples after his resurrection, when he spake to them "of things *"pertaining to the kingdom of God,"* (h) and in the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Either, these truths "pertaining to the kingdom of God" were revealed for the benefit of the church in all ages, or they were not? If they were not, why were they revealed at all? If they were, where are they to be found except in the writings of the apostles? And if the writings of the apostles contain them, is it not the most stupendous folly or arrogance to deny in the positive tone of many Socinians that those writings are of the same divine veracity, authority, and efficacy, as the rest of Scripture; or that He who dictated them taught his own religion?

A second objection, frequently advanced with great vehemence and confidence, and to which I have already adverted in note (p) of this letter, is, that "it does not agree with the moral perfections of God to punish sin in a surety; that it is unjust and inequitable to appoint such a way of salvation as would require an innocent creature to suffer that the offender may be spared." Indeed! Then how was it that Abel, who slew the innocent "firstlings of his flock," thus, "offered unto God a *more excellent* sacrifice than Cain," who "brought of the

(h) Acts, i. 3.

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“fruit of the *ground* an offering unto the Lord,” (i) and by so doing avoided the *injustice* of shedding innocent blood? This objection, as you must at once perceive, by aiming at too much, accomplishes nothing; for it applies just as forcibly against sacrifices of every kind, as against that of the Redeemer; and should, therefore, come from a professed unbeliever, and not from one who bows to “the law and the “testimony.” Now taking the question for a moment upon its broadest ground, it is a notorious and incontrovertible fact, that *sacrifices* have almost universally prevailed in all ages and in all countries, as well the most civilized as the most barbarous. Reasoning from this fact, we say, either sacrifices had *some* foundation in true religion, which led the whole world to practise them for four thousand years, and the heathen part of the world to practise them till the present time; or else the principle of reason so much boasted of for its efficacy and energy, which suffered men to pursue this train of idiotism and inhumanity for six thousand years, is a very defective and insufficient guide. One of these positions is indisputable. If the latter be admitted, then Revelation was absolutely necessary, to reform and instruct the world: if the former, then sacrifices were of Divine institution. The adversaries of Revelation may take their choice of these alternatives. (k)

(i) Gen. iv. 3, 4. Heb. xi. 4.

(k) “It has been made a question (says the late Mr. Jones, of Nayland) by those who question every thing, whether sacrifices

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But to those who allow the truth of the Mosaic history, and will therein trace the origin of sacrifices, it must appear evident, that sacrifice was from the beginning (as in the case of Abel) acceptable to God; and that *faith* made it so:—that offerings of *creatures* were sacrifices of atonement for sin; while offerings of *fruits* were thank-offerings;—that sacrifices for sin enforced plainly, though typically, these two important truths: 1st, that every sin caused a forfeiture of the offender's life; and, 2dly, that God vouchsafed notwithstanding to have mercy on the sinner, and to accept of some other life as a *ransom*, in lieu of that forfeiture. Sacrifices, in short, were, from the first, seals of the covenant of mercy into which God entered with man immediately after the fall; and there is nothing in point of their injustice, that does not apply with greater force against the patriarchal

“ were of Divine Institution. But sacrifices are *descriptive*; and as  
 “ the thing described is the redemption of man by the shedding of the  
 “ blood of Christ, which never could be known but by revelation;  
 “ the supposition that sacrifice could be of human invention is an  
 “ *absurdity*. It is as if we were to imagine that words could be invent-  
 “ ed by those who had no knowledge of things; or that *signs* could  
 “ be brought into use without any prior idea of the *things signified*.  
 “ The knowledge of a redeemer was first given to man; and the  
 “ observation of sacrifice was the expression of that knowledge by  
 “ a significant act. All mankind were derived from those to whom  
 “ this knowledge was first given; and therefore all nations of the  
 “ world, in all times of the world, did in some form or other retain  
 “ the observation of sacrifice, for the putting away of sin.” *Lectures*  
*on the Hebrews.*

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and Mosaic sacrifices, than against that of Jesus Christ: for this latter, it must not be forgotten, was perfectly *voluntary*. His own language, even according to the Socinian translation of it, was, “For *this* “my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life, “that I may take it again. *None taketh it from me; but* “*I lay it down* OF MYSELF. I have authority to “lay it down, and I have authority to receive it “again.” (1) This completely annihilates the force of the objection, since it shows that the sufferings and death of Christ, being voluntary, must necessarily be consistent with the equity and justice of God, although the innocent suffered that the guilty might be redeemed: that being, indeed, the only way in which the innocent *can* suffer without infringing upon justice.

It is of some importance to remark, that many of those who are loudest and most eager in urging this objection admit that Jesus suffered for our *benefit*; which is much the same as refuting their own argument: for surely there is just as little reason why an innocent person should suffer for the *benefit* of a criminal, as that he should suffer in his *stead*. Indeed, as Archbishop Tillotson remarks, “If the matter “were searched to the bottom, all this perverse contention about our Saviour’s suffering for our benefit, “but not in our stead, will signify just nothing. “For if Christ died for our benefit, so as some way

(1) John, x. 17, 18.

“ or other *by virtue of his death and sufferings*, to save  
“ us from the wrath of God, and to procure our  
“ escape from eternal death; this, for ought I  
“ know, is all that any body means by his dying in  
“ our stead. For he that dies with an intention to do  
“ that benefit to another, as to *save him from death*,  
“ doth certainly to all intents and purposes die in his  
“ place and stead. And if they will grant this to be  
“ their meaning, the controversy is at an end; and  
“ both sides are agreed in the thing, and do only  
“ differ in the phrase and manner of expression;  
“ which is, to seek a quarrel and an occasion of dif-  
“ ference where there is no real ground for it; a  
“ thing which ought to be very far from reasonable  
“ and peaceable minds. For many of the Socinians  
“ say, that our Saviour’s voluntary obedience and  
“ sufferings procured his exaltation at the right hand  
“ of God, and power and authority to forgive sins,  
“ and to give eternal life to as many as he pleased; so  
“ that they grant that his obedience and sufferings,  
“ in the meritorious consequence of them, redound  
“ to our benefit and advantage as much as we pretend  
“ and say they do; only they are loth in express  
“ terms to acknowledge that Christ died in our stead:  
“ and this, for no other reason that I can imagine,  
“ but *because they have denied it so often and so long.*”

The last objection I shall here notice has been  
stated in the following terms: “According to the usual  
“ theory of atonement, none less than a Divine per-  
“ son can bear away the sins of the whole world;

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“yet a Divine person cannot atone for sin, because “Deity cannot die.” This, it must be acknowledged, presents a difficulty of formidable aspect; yet it is one which arises rather from our ignorance of the nature of death, than from any inadequate views of the nature of atonement. The following observations will, I trust, greatly diminish the difficulty, if they do not remove it. The death of a being constituted of a material and an immaterial part, does not consist in a perfect extinction of its existence, but in a separation of its constituent parts. What we call the death of an animal is a separation of the spiritual principle of animation and sensation from the organized matter which it animated. The death of a man is, in a similar manner, the separation of the spiritual source of sensation, volition, and action, from the material organization which forms the human body. “The body without the spirit is dead;” (*m*) it is no longer an active, thinking, sensitive, determining being, but an insensible, inactive lump of clay. After death the *man* no longer exists in his compound nature; his constituent parts are separated; his body to be still farther decomposed, and divided, but his soul to remain entire, a single, indivisible, indestructible soul as before. It does not follow, therefore, that the soul is dead: indeed, strictly speaking, a *soul* cannot die. None but a compound being can undergo that separation which constitutes death. But a soul is simple and in-

(*m*) James, ii. 26.

divisible ; for if it were divisible into two or more parts, those parts, each partaking of the same spiritual essence, would each possess distinct consciousness, and would each, therefore, become a distinct soul; which is repugnant to reason. Hence it appears that a soul, though it may be annihilated by the power of Him who created it, cannot *die*. What is dead *exists*, however its mode of subsistence be changed ; but what is annihilated has *no* existence. Admitting this, the objection must be relinquished ; for, allowing Christ to have a soul (which all the Humanitarians do allow), it might as pertinently be objected, that, since his *soul* cannot die, he cannot atone for sin : and therefore, since nothing Divine, nor any thing human, can atone for sin, and nothing else can (see Hebrews x. 4), it would result that sin cannot be atoned for at all, which is contrary to the uniform tenour of Scripture.

From this view of the subject it follows, that when the Divine and human spirit of the Redeemer ceased to animate his body, the *person* of Jesus Christ as properly died as did that of Moses, David, or any other, when such individual yielded up his spirit. It follows also, that the death of Jesus Christ neither caused any mutation in his Divine nature, nor in the powers and properties of his soul. As to the value or efficacy of his death, that manifestly depends upon the value of his person in the scale of being. Among animated beings relative importance is estimated by the proportionate extent to which the spirits which animate them



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carry their actions or their influence. Thus we place a sparrow, a pigeon, and an eagle, successively higher in the scale: in like manner, a sheep, an ox, an elephant, would have assigned to them successively increased values. A rational and accountable being is naturally placed above all these: of rational beings, a man is reckoned superior to a child; a philosopher, to a peasant; a monarch, to one of his subjects: and the effects resulting from their deaths are proportionally felt. Hence, since Jesus Christ is, according to the system I am now explaining, infinitely wiser than the profoundest philosopher, infinitely more powerful than the greatest monarch, his death must be sufficiently efficacious to cancel all the guilt which rendered that awful event necessary. “Possessing (as Dr. Abbadie remarks) the glory of the Deity in the midst of infirmities and miseries incident to a nature like our own, he need undergo but one death of an infinite value; and God who gave him to ‘suffer for us’ made us a present without limit.”

Thus have I endeavoured to state, establish, and defend from the principal objections, that great and fundamental doctrine of the new or Christian dispensation, whence it derived the name *Ευαγγελιον*, *ἡ ἀγαθή*, *Gospel*, *good or joyful news*. It remains that I solicit your earnest attention to some striking and useful reflections upon the sufferings and cross of Christ, from authors who have already furnished me with quotations in this letter.

“To the exterior view and carnal sense of men,

“ our Lord was then (on the cross) indeed exposed to  
“ scorn and shame; but, to spiritual and sincere discerning,  
“ all his and our enemies did there hang up  
“ as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and  
“ undone.

“ There the Devil, that strong and sturdy one,  
“ did hang up bound in chains, disarmed and rifled,  
“ quite baffled and confounded, mankind being rescued  
“ from his tyrannic power.

“ There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit  
“ beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly  
“ admired excellencies, did hang up all defaced and  
“ disparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: for, *God*  
“ *forbid* (saith he) *that I should glory, save in the*  
“ *cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me,*  
“ *and I unto the world.*

“ There, in a most lively representation, and most  
“ admirable pattern, was exhibited *the mortification*  
“ *of our flesh*, with its affections and lusts; and our  
“ *old man was crucified that the body of sin might be*  
“ *destroyed.*

“ There our sins, being (as St. Peter telleth us)  
“ *carried up by him unto the gibbet*, did hang as marks  
“ of his victorious prowess, as malefactors, by him  
“ *condemned in the flesh*, as objects of our horror and  
“ hatred.

“ There death itself hung gasping, with its sting  
“ pulled out, and all its terrors quelled; his death  
“ having prevented ours, and induced immortality.

“ There all wrath, *enmity*, strife (the banes of

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“ comfortable life), did hang *abolished in his flesh*  
“ and *slain upon the cross, by the blood whereof he*  
“ *made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and*  
“ *earth.*”

“ This consideration is, farther, most useful to  
“ render us very humble and sensible of our weak-  
“ ness, our vileness, our wretchedness. For how  
“ low was that our fall, from which we could not be  
“ raised without such a depression of God’s only  
“ Son? How great is that impotency, which needed  
“ such a succour to relieve it? How abominable  
“ must be that iniquity, which might not be expiated  
“ without so costly a sacrifice? How deplorable is  
“ that misery, which could not be removed without  
“ commutation of so strange a suffering? Would the  
“ Son of God have so *emptied* (Ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε. Phil.  
“ ii. 7) and debased himself for nothing? Would he  
“ have endured such pains and ignominies for a  
“ trifle? No, surely; if our guilt had been slight,  
“ if our case had been tolerable, the Divine wisdom  
“ would have chosen a more cheap and easy remedy  
“ for us.

“ Is it not madness for us to be conceited of any  
“ worth in ourselves, to confide in any *merit of our*  
“ *works*, to glory in any thing belonging to us, to  
“ fancy ourselves brave, fine, happy persons, worthy  
“ of great respect and esteem; whereas our unwor-  
“ thiness, our demerit, our forlorn estate, did extort  
“ from the most gracious God a displeasure needing  
“ such a reconciliation, did impose upon the most

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“glorious Son of God a necessity to undergo such a  
“punishment in our behalf?

“Yet, while this contemplation doth breed sober  
“humility, it also should preserve us from base ab-  
“jectness of mind; for it doth evidently demonstrate  
“that, according to God’s infallible judgment, we  
“are very considerable; that our souls are capable of  
“high regard: that it is a great pity we should be  
“lost and abandoned to ruin. For surely, had not  
“God much esteemed and respected us, he would  
“not for our sakes have so debased himself, or  
“deigned to endure so much for our recovery; Divine  
“justice would not have exacted or accepted such a  
“ransome for our souls, had they been of little worth.  
“We should not therefore slight ourselves, nor de-  
“mean ourselves like sorry contemptible wretches,  
“as if we deserved no consideration, no pity from  
“ourselves; as if we thought our souls not worth  
“saving, which yet our Lord thought good to pur-  
“chase at so dear a rate.” (n)

To this language of the eloquent and philosophic  
Dr. Barrow, allow me to add the following powerful  
expostulation of our Reformers. “Canst thou think  
“of this, O sinful man, and not tremble within  
“thyself? Canst thou hear it quietly, without re-  
“morse of conscience and sorrow of heart? Did  
“Christ suffer his passion for thee, and wilt thou  
“show no compassion towards him? While Christ

(n) Barrow’s Sermon on the Passion.

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“ was yet hanging on the cross, and yielding up the  
“ ghost, the Scripture witnesseth that *the veil of the*  
“ *temple did rent in twain, and the earth did quake,*  
“ *that the stones clave asunder, that the graves did*  
“ *open, and the dead bodies rise;* and shall the heart  
“ of man be nothing moved to remember how griev-  
“ ously and cruelly he was handled of the Jews for  
“ our sins? Shall man show himself to be more hard-  
“ hearted than stones, to have less compassion than  
“ dead bodies? Call to mind, O sinful creature, and  
“ set before thine eyes *Christ crucified*: think thou  
“ seest his body stretched out in length upon the  
“ cross, his head crowned with sharp thorns, and  
“ his hands and his feet pierced with nails, his heart  
“ opened with a long spear, his flesh rent and torn  
“ with whips, his brows sweating water and blood:  
“ think thou hearest him now crying in an intolerable  
“ agony to his Father, and saying, *My God, My*  
“ *God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Couldst thou be-  
“ hold this woful sight, or hear this mournful voice,  
“ without tears, considering that he suffered all this  
“ not for any desert of his own, but only for the  
“ grievousness of thy sins? O that mankind should  
“ put the everlasting Son of God to such pains! O  
“ that we should be the occasion of his death, and  
“ the only cause of his condemnation! May we not  
“ justly cry, Woe worth the time that ever we sinned?  
“ O, my brethren, let this image of Christ crucified  
“ be always printed in our hearts; let it stir us up to  
“ the hatred of sin, and provoke our minds to the

“ earnest love of Almighty God. For why? is not  
“ sin, think you, a grievous thing in his sight, seeing  
“ for the transgressing of God’s precept he con-  
“ demned all the world unto perpetual death, and  
“ would not be pacified, but only with the blood of  
“ his own Son?” (o)

(o) Second Homily on the Passion, p. 359. Oxford edit. 1810. I beg leave to remark here, once for all, that the frequency of my quoting from the Homilies, and other discourses of great men amongst the Episcopalians, does not arise from my supposing they are of superior authority, or that they have clearer views of Scriptural truth, than Baxter, Howe, Watts, Doddridge, and some other eminent Dissenting authors; but from the circumstance that these Letters were originally written for the benefit of a professed member of the Church of England; and because a large portion of those who are adverse to the doctrines I am here defending, and which are so forcibly stated in the “ Articles” and “ Homilies,” fancy themselves to be very “ sound Churchmen” notwithstanding.

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## LETTER XV.

### *On the Divinity of Jesus Christ.*

“FOUR things,” said the great and judicious Hooker, “concur to make complete the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ: his Deity, his manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other, being joined in one. Four principal heresies there are which have in those things withstood the truth. *Arians*, by bending themselves against the Deity of Christ; *Apollinarians*, by maiming and misinterpreting that which belongeth to his human nature; *Nestorians*, by rending Christ asunder, and dividing him into two persons: the followers of *Eutiches*, by confounding in his person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have been four ancient general councils: the council of Nice, to define against *Arians*, A. D. 325; the council of Constantinople against *Apollinarians*, A. D. 381; that of Ephesus against *Nestorians*, A. D. 431; against *Eutichians* that of Chalcedon, A. D. 451: the decisions of which may be comprised in four words: *αληθως truly*, *τελεως perfectly*, *αδιαίρετως indivisibly*, and *ασυγχυτως distinctly*. The first applied to his being God; and the second to his being Man; the third to his being of both *one*; and the fourth to his still continuing in that one *both*. We



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“ may fully by way of abridgment, comprise whatso-  
 “ ever antiquity hath at large handled, either in decla-  
 “ ration of Christian belief, or in refutation of the  
 “ aforesaid heresies, within the compass of these four  
 “ heads.” (o)

This view of the Messiah's person agrees with the opinion that has most universally prevailed, among Christians, from the first introduction of Christianity into the world, down to the present period. Nor does the mere existence of other opinions by any means militate against the truth of this : for, since evidence, though it be clear, forcible, and satisfactory, does not *necessarily* convince, the human mind being free either to receive evidence with its due weight, or to reject it as defective ; it follows that a doctrine, as well as a fact, *may* be disbelieved by minds of a peculiar structure, however preponderating and decisive may be the evidence in its favour. This is undoubted, and an apostle referring to matters of faith, accounts for it in language which I tremble while I quote :—“ If our Gospel *be* hid, it is hid to  
 “ those *that destroy themselves whose minds the god*  
 “ *of this world hath blinded.*”

Many learned and ingenious men disbelieve the Divinity of Christ ; but neither the process by which they have arrived at their disbelief, nor that by which they endeavour to prove that we are in error, seems calculated to operate strongly upon the minds of those

(o) Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. § 54.

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who have been previously persuaded that the Scripture is the production of *inspired* writers, who were so inspired that they might teach doctrines infallibly true (many of which could be known no other way), and whose instructions, therefore, are to be implicitly received. Having ascertained that the Bible is the Word of God,—that none of the discrepancies between the various existing copies in the original languages affect any doctrine, or any important precept,—and that the translation we adopt is correct,—we have nothing to do but to determine its plain and obvious meaning, and receive it as true. (*p*) But

(*p*) “ It hath been the custom of late to lay too much stress upon Jewish idioms, in the exposition of the didactic parts of the New Testament. The Gospel is a *general* revelation. If it is delivered in a style which is not perspicuous to the illiterate of any nation except the Jewish, it is as much locked up from general apprehension, as if the sacred books had been written in the vernacular gibberish of the Jews of that age. The Holy Spirit, which directed the apostles and the evangelists to the use of the tongue, which in their day was the most generally understood—the Greek—would, for the same reason, it may be presumed, suggest to them a style which might be generally perspicuous. It is therefore a principle with me, that the true sense of any phrase in the New Testament is, for the most part, what may be called a standing sense: that which will be the first to occur to common people of every country, and in every age; and I am apt to think, that the difference between this standing sense and the Jewish sense will, in all cases, be far less than is imagined, or none at all; because, though different languages differ widely in their refined and elevated idioms, common speech is in all languages pretty much the same.” Horsley’s *Letters in Controversy with Dr. Priestley*, p. 122, Ed. 3.

this is not the plan pursued by those who deny the Divinity of the Messiah. They constantly examine the Scriptures rather as critics, than as humble inquirers after truth: the natural consequence of which is, that they are critical beyond measure, and adopt those “refinements in criticism which make men nauseate what is obvious, and pursue through the mazes of etymology what was never imagined before.” This, indeed, is the necessary result of adopting a defective hypothesis. If both the Divine and human natures meet in the person of the Messiah, and if they are essentially distinct though they are inseparably united, then is it to be expected that some passages should clearly announce his Divinity, others as clearly his humanity, while others may (perhaps indistinctly) indicate both. But if Jesus Christ be merely man, then all those texts which declare his Divine nature, or indicate his compound nature, must be either rejected as spurious, or explained away by the arts of criticism. Hence Socinians argue, that when Jesus is called “the Son of man,” the words must not only be construed in the most literal, but in the most restricted, sense, so that the word *man* shall be understood to mean *one* particular man: but when he is called “the Son of God,” they must be explained to mean knowledge, commission, affection, office (though the *office* of son is a strange vagary, that would enter the mind of none but a Socinian critic), any thing, or nothing, provided it be not taken literally. If one phrase of St. John be in

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favour of the Deity of Christ, it is either a solecism, or it is Hebraical-Greek; if another phrase of the same writer have the same tendency, it is an oratorical flourish, or it is an Atticism, or it is an hyperbole; as if it were not contrary to the entire scope and practice of the sacred writers to employ hyperboles in order to do *prejudice to the glory of God*; which, nevertheless, is done *repeatedly* not only by John, but by all the apostles, if the Socinian hypothesis be true: if in a third place he say, when speaking of Jesus, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only Son of the Father," (*q*) we are told it means "his miracles," which it should seem are "used to express merely a higher degree of *affection*." If Jesus Christ call himself "the Son of God;" it is a strong expression, conformable to the Eastern phraseology, signifying that he was sent by God; though the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were at least as well acquainted with Eastern phraseology as we are, understood the language literally, and said that Jesus was guilty of "blasphemy, because he made himself *equal* with God." (*r*) If, as Jerome and Eusebius state, John wrote his Gospel in vindication of our Lord's Divinity, against Cerinthus and the Ebionites, still a critic with a certain turn of mind may manage to elude its force; as does Leclerc, who thus ridiculously renders the first sentence of John's Gospel:—"In the beginning was reason, and rea-

(*q*) See the Socinian version of John, i. 15, and the notes upon that text, p. 201, 202.

(*r*) John, v. 18. x, 33.

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“ son was *in* God, and reason was God.” But as a complete specimen of critical ingenuity attenuated into absurdity, I beg to present you with the late Mr. Theophilus Lindsey’s translation of part of the 1st Chapter of this Gospel. Leclerc’s version is not sufficiently unreasonable; we are, therefore, now presented with it after this fashion:—

“ In the beginning was Wisdom, and Wisdom  
 “ was with God, and God was Wisdom. The same  
 “ was in the beginning with God. All things were  
 “ made by *it*, and without *it* was nothing made. In  
 “ *it* was life, and the life was the light of men. And  
 “ the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness  
 “ comprehended it not.

“ *It* (Divine Wisdom) was in the world, and the  
 “ world was made by *it*, and the world knew *it* not.  
 “ *It* came to its own land, and its own people receiv-  
 “ ed *it* not. But as many as received *it*, to them *it*  
 “ gave power to become the sons of God, even to  
 “ them who believe on *its* name.

“ And Wisdom became man, and dwelt among us;  
 “ and we beheld *its* glory, the glory as of the well-  
 “ beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Now, in all this quotation, although as we are informed (*s*) its “ sense is approved by Dr. Lardner, “ Dr. Priestley, Mr. Wakefield, and others,” there appears to be only one sentence accurately translated: “ the light *shineth in darkness*, and the darkness “ *comprehended it not:*” of the truth of which, consi-

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dering it as a prediction, the translation itself, and the approbation of such truly learned men as Lardner, Priestley, and Wakefield, is a most lamentable proof. What a deplorable system of theology must that be, which requires such egregious trifling to support it?

But even this is not the whole of the ridiculous incumbrance that impedes the progress of the theological hypothesis, to which I now advert. It takes for granted, that uninspired men may, at the distance of eighteen hundred years, know more of “the mind of Christ,” and of the nature of his religion, than those who saw and conversed with him in “the days of his flesh,” and were chosen and inspired to communicate his doctrines, by their preaching and writings, to “the end of the world.” It, therefore, cherishes a sentiment which is diametrically opposite to that humility and lowliness of mind which is essential to Christianity, and which is possessed by those to whom God has promised to “give *grace*.” But, more than all, it makes it the duty of teachers of the Gospel to be ever active in sinking the value, utility, and importance of the Gospel; and diminishing “the riches of Divine mercy.” Ambassadors and ministers in general are proud to exalt the power, honour, and dignity of the monarch whom they represent and serve: but, according to the Socinian theory and practice, the chief employment of ministers and “ambassadors of Christ” is to depreciate as far as possible the character of their Lord and King, and to show that he is not entitled to the honour, dignity, majesty, and

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power, which others usually ascribe to him. One of this class of Gospel ministers, Mr. Belsham, seems by no means persuaded of the purity of the life of Jesus. "Whether (says he) the perfection of Christ's character in public life (as recorded by the evangelists) combined with the general declarations of his freedom from sin, establish, or were intended to establish, the fact, that *Jesus through the whole course of his PRIVATE life, was completely exempt from all the errors and failings of human nature*, is a question of no great intrinsic moment, and concerning which we have no sufficient *data* to lead to a satisfactory answer"!! In another work the same writer affirms that we are *totally* ignorant of the place where Christ resides, and of the occupations in which he is engaged! (t) These are notions which Thomas Paine, with all his hatred to Christianity, would probably have been ashamed to promulgate.

The scheme of theology, which includes the divinity of Jesus Christ as an essential and fundamental part, is free from these puerilities, absurdities, anomalies, and I could almost say, blasphemies. According to this scheme we believe that Jesus Christ is *a man*; that he is also *GOD*; yet we do not believe that the man Jesus is deified. We do not worship the man Jesus; but we believe his own declaration relative to the union of the Divine and human nature in his

(t) Belsham on the Divinity of Christ, p. 190. Belsham's Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise, p. 85.



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person, when conversing with Nicodemus, and therefore we do worship the God who dwells in the man; for “*in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Deity, bodeily;*” and “*through him we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.*” (v) We do not deny that there is something mysterious in this, for in our present state we do not expect to arrive at the full “knowledge of the *mystery of God*, in which are *hidden* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:” (w) nor do we forget that the Scriptures are intended rather to reveal what God is in relation to us, (x) than what he is in himself. In our system the difficulty is so transferred, that it lies in the *object*, not in the *terms*; and this is natural, because the object of worship is spiritual and infinite. In metaphysics we have many equal difficulties: and even in the spiritual part of our own nature. Thus, our soul has the three different faculties of understanding, memory, and will, proceeding in succession from each other; yet they are co-existent, and constitute not three souls but one soul. Indeed, in the usual transactions of life we frequently, nay, commonly, know the *use* of objects, while we continue ignorant of their *nature*: and, in like manner, it

(v) See the original of John iii. 13, where the  $\delta \omega \nu \epsilon \nu \tau \omega \sigma \upsilon \gamma \gamma \omega \nu$  is peculiarly forcible: See also Col. ii. 9. Eph. ii. 18.

(w) Col. ii. 2. 3.

(x) See Letter IV. vol. i. p. 76. Let it be remarked, too, that in point of simplicity of explanation, the doctrine of the Divine unity has no advantage over that of the trinity. “That unity, which must be the foundation of all being, is itself of all things the most mysterious and incomprehensible.” Read Horsley, p. 287, &c.

will be to our benefit, if we immediately endeavour to experience the use of religious truths, and not wait until we can perfectly comprehend them. According to our system, I say, the *objects* are sublime, the language and expression easy; while in the sense of those who deny the Divinity of the Messiah, the objects are quite within the grasp of our comprehension, but the *expression* is obscure; and it is an obscurity which has none of the causes that occasion the obscurity of really difficult passages of Scripture: a circumstance which is very surprising and unaccountable, and sufficient of itself to produce long hesitation in reflecting men before they wander in the labyrinths of Socinianism.

Having premised thus much respecting the different modes of procedure of those who embrace, and those who reject the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, I shall now direct your attention to a few of the arguments upon which I think this great truth has been irrefragably established.

I. The Divine nature of Jesus Christ was foretold by some of the prophets, either explicitly, when speaking of the Messiah, or by describing works and characteristics of God, which the apostles have declared were referable to Jesus Christ.

Thus, the prophet Isaiah, in a passage where he clearly predicts the coming of the Messiah, describes his person and character in the following terms :

“ Unto us a Child is born ; unto us a Son is given ;

“ And the government shall be upon his shoulder ;

“ And his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor,

“ The mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age,

“ The Prince of Peace.

“ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no  
(y) end.”

In another portion of his prophecy Isaiah says,

“ Jehovah God of hosts shall be

“ A stone of stumbling, and rock of offence,

“ To the two houses of Israel.”

The apostle Peter says, *Jesus Christ* is that “ stone  
“ of stumbling, and rock of offence.” (z)

The same prophet predicts the coming of one who  
should be the harbinger of God, and cry,

———“ In the wilderness prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH :

“ Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

St. Matthew applies this prediction expressly to *John the Baptist*, (a) who was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. But unless Jesus be Jehovah, this prophecy cannot apply to John the Baptist.

Isaiah again, in another place, says, in the name of “ Jehovah:”

“ Look unto me, and be ye saved, O all ye remote people of the earth.

“ For I am God, and there is none else.

“ To ME shall every knee bow, shall every tongue swear ;

“ In JEHOVAH shall be justified, and make their boast, all the seed of Israel.” (b)

Paul applies this prophecy to Christ, the judge of

(y) Lowth's Isaiah, ix. 5, 6.

(z) Is. viii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 8.

(a) Is. xl. 8. Matt. iii. 1—3.

(b) Is. xlv. 22, 23, 25.

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all : “ As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow  
“ to *me*, and every tongue shall confess to God.” (c)

The prophet Zechariah, speaking in the name of God, says, “ They shall look upon *me* whom they  
“ have pierced.” An evangelist relates, that “ one  
“ of the soldiers pierced Jesus’s side with a spear . . .  
“ . . . . so that the Scripture was fulfilled . . . . they  
“ shall look on him whom they pierced.” (d) Here  
the prophet foretells that they would pierce *God*; the  
evangelist says, they pierced *Jesus*; and refers to this  
circumstance as a completion of the prophecy.

The Royal Psalmist has many distinct predictions  
respecting the Messiah, which prove his divinity: I  
shall only select those which were quoted or evidently  
referred to, by Paul, in the 1st chapter of his Epistle  
to the Hebrews. In the second psalm, universally al-  
lowed to be prophetic of the Messiah, he is declared  
to be of the same nature with the Father by the lan-  
guage, “ Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten  
“ thee.” Paul quotes this passage to show that Christ  
is superior to *angels*; “ for,” says he, “ to which of  
“ the *angels* said he at any time, Thou art my Son,  
“ this day have I *begotten* thee?” (e)

(c) Rom. xiv. 11. I may just add that Jer. xxiii. 6, compared  
with John, xii. 41; Joel, ii. 32, with Rom. x. 13; and Malachi, iii.  
1, 2, with the character and office of John the Baptist, furnish irre-  
sistible arguments to the same purpose.

(d) Zech. xii. 10. John, xix. 34—37.

(e) Ps. ii. 7. Heb. i. 5.—It is worthy of remark, that the So-  
cinians, in their New Version, evade the force of this passage in a  
very disingenuous manner, by putting a *false* translation in the text,

In another passage the Psalmist says, "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him (i. e. Jehovah,)

and the true one in a note. In the text they give—"This day I have adopted thee," while in a small note, which not one reader in ten will look at, they say, "begotten thee. Gr. and N." To be sure, it would require a front of brass, to deny that the original ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε, is properly translated in the authorized version. Why, then, should *adopted* be thrust into the text, and *begotten* be obscured in a note? Is adoption and begetting synonymous? Or, in such a case as that before us, can one, with any degree of fairness, be substituted for the other? In another passage (John i. 15), these critics get quit of an equal incumbrance upon their system, by an amazing piece of delicacy: "Only begotten" (say they, quoting from Mr. Lindsey's List of *Wrong Translations*) "is most gross and improper language to be used in English, especially with respect to Deity." I would be glad to ask these admirable detectors of "*wrong translations*," by what other English term they will express the true meaning of *μονογενής*, with equal correctness and equal conciseness?

Mr. Belsham, who seems to rely alike upon the ignorance of his admirers and the supineness of those who oppose his dangerous speculations, affirms positively (p. 259 of his book on the Divinity of Christ) that the word *αγαπητός*, "*does not occur in St. John*," and that therefore that writer used *μονογενής* to denote *well-beloved*. How will the astonishment and horror of the unlearned reader be excited when I assure him, notwithstanding this bold assertion, that John employs *αγαπητός*, in his Gospel and Epistles, at least *eight times*! Indeed both these words occur in one and the same chapter: see 1 John iv. 1, 7, 9, 11. Such misrepresentation and evasion, as are glanced at in this note, would be very contemptible even in reasoning upon minor topics; but it is difficult to reconcile them with common integrity or common humanity when they are employed to seduce men into a system in the adoption or rejection of which, for aught these writers can show to the contrary, the salvation of the soul may be deeply implicated.

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“all ye gods, or angels.” Here David describes the Supreme God, and commands the angels to worship *him*. Paul quotes the psalm, (*f*) applies it to Jesus, and commands the angels to worship *HIM*. In Paul’s estimation, therefore, Jesus is God supreme.

Again, in the hundred and second psalm, “the afflicted, who poureth out his complaint before *the* LORD,” says, “O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: *thy* years are throughout all generations. Of old hast THOU *laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of THY hands*. They shall perish, &c.—But THOU *art the same, and THY years shall have no end.*” St. Paul applies this also to Jesus Christ, (*g*) to prove that he was really God, because he made the world.

Once more, in the forty-fifth Psalm, an avowed and very expressive prophecy of the majesty and grace of the Messiah, we have this language: “Thy throne, O God, is *for ever and ever,*” &c. And this also is cited by Paul, to show that the title of the everlasting God belonged to Christ. “But unto *the Son* he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” (*h*)

(*f*) Psalm xcvi. 7. Heb. i.

(*g*) Psalm cii. 24—27. Heb. i. 10—12.

(*h*) Psalm xlv. 6. Heb. i. 8. Here again the Socinians have been evincing their ingenuity in a remarkable manner. Their translation is, “God is *thy throne* for ever and ever.” This appears to approximate more nearly to nonsense than either to pure theology or genuine philosophy; but it serves to exemplify the natural progress of erroneous sentiment. Jesus Christ is not the Son of God really,

The quotations, here made, are not from authors who are careless in the employment and selection of their language, nor from those who were deficient in jealousy for the honour of God. On the contrary, they would not suffer the character of God to be depreciated, nor would they permit that of man to be unduly exalted, or in any way to usurp the place of God. "Surely," says one of them, "men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. Power belongeth unto God. Trust in Him at all times." (i) Another says, "Cease ye from man; wherein is he to be accounted of?" (k) Another has this strong denunciation,— "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." (l) Yet, when speaking of Jesus Christ, their language is—"Embrace the Son lest he be angry,

but by adoption (and adopted not in the opinion of the apostle Paul, but of modern theologians, who *mistranslate* his language to favour their notions): he discharges his "office of Son" so well, that he is to be rewarded by having his Almighty Father transformed into a *chair of state*, on which he is to sit "for ever and ever." Such is the way in which these writers preserve the awful and sublime character of God from degradation. Truly this is a tissue of absurdity very adroitly woven, considering that it is done by those who pride themselves upon their *rationality*, and who are presumptuous enough to accuse the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews of indulging in "far-fetched analogies, and inaccurate reasonings." It ought to be added to the honour of Dr. Carpenter, of Exeter, that after he had selected "God is thy throne" as one of the most important *improved* renderings, he admitted in his "Letters to Mr. Veysie," that the idiom of the Greeks *forbids* our so rendering it.

(i) Ps. lxii. 8, 9, 11.

(k) Is. ii. 22.

(l) Jer. xvii. 5.



“and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: *blessed are all they that put their trust in HIM.*” (m) If any words can communicate definite ideas, the grand truth, conveyed by the preceding passages, is, that in the estimation of the apostles, the Messiah possesses the Divine nature and attributes, and is therefore entitled to confidence and worship as God.

Men, therefore, who dislike the great peculiarities of the Christian system, may exercise their ingenuity to the utmost, may labour to render some books of Holy Writ suspected, and may speculate on the extent of apostolic inspiration, as much and as long as they please; yet they cannot shake the certainty of these two truths: 1st, That the apostles have applied to Jesus Christ certain passages from the prophets which characterise the supreme God. And 2dly, That if Jesus Christ does not partake of the glories of the Divine essence, and is but a mere creature (to whom consequently those characters do not belong), we must look upon the apostles, not as teachers of truth, but as men who betray others into idolatry by most impious and blasphemous applications of the prophetic books. Nay, we may add farther, that if the notions of the modern Socinians as to the nature of Christ be correct, it follows, inevitably, that neither the prophets exactly predicted things to come, nor the apostles understood the prophets; a consequence which

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would sap the foundation of both the Jewish and Christian religions, and leave no manner of harmony between the Old and the New Testament. This is a powerful consideration; to which however, others may be added equally pressing.

II. The prophecies, miracles, language, and conduct of Jesus Christ, furnish indubitable proofs of his Divinity.

The Jewish prophets, when about to announce future things, waited till something extraneous roused within them the prophetic spirit, and then plainly indicated that they were animated by a foreign impulse. Not so the Messiah. He prophesied with the same ease, calmness, and composure, as he spoke: the future mysteries and events which he predicted were not suddenly infused into *his* mind; they were familiar objects to him, always present to his view, their images always (if I may so say) existing within himself: all ages to come were prefigured clearly in his capacious intellect. So that, whether he foretold his own sufferings and death, the destruction of the temple, the resurrection of the dead, or the awful solemnities of the day of judgment, he manifested the same undisturbed tranquillity.

Thus again, with regard to his miracles, such was his "mighty power," that they bore no marks of *dependence*. He stilled the raging of the sea, without any effort. He raised the dead with as great ease as he performed the most common actions. A simple and gentle command caused tempests to cease, and

the dead to come forth from their graves: and instead of guarding the bystanders against forming too high conceptions of him on these accounts, he informed them, that whatever wonder was effected by his Father on earth, he likewise performed; and that his Father's works were *his*. He attributed to *himself* all the grand things he performed. Was this the conduct of a *true* prophet, if he had been only a prophet?

Under the old dispensation, it sometimes pleased God to permit his glory and his power to shine forth in his servants. Thus Enoch was translated to heaven, Elijah was conveyed thither in a fiery chariot, John the Baptist was foretold as the harbinger of God. Yet these were individual circumstances. But in Jesus Christ we have an assemblage of wonders. In him all the different characteristics of a Divine mission, dispersed amongst the extraordinary men who had formerly been messengers of the Most High, are collected; and in a manner infinitely more glorious and Divine. He prophesies, but with far more minuteness and sublimity than John the Baptist; nay, he penetrates into the future with more accuracy and clearness than any of the prophets: he appears transfigured in Mount Tabor, and surrounded with more glory than Moses: he ascends to heaven, but with more marks of power and majesty than Elijah: he re-proves "wickedness in high places," and purifies the temple, assuming the authority of "the Lord of that temple." And on all occasions his language comports with his dignity.

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Jesus Christ, we find, is continually representing himself as equal to his Father. "I and my Father," says he, "are one." (*n*) He acquaints us that he hath come down from heaven, and that he hath quitted the bosom of God; that he was before Abraham; that he was before all things; that eternal life consists in the knowledge of the Son as well as in the knowledge of the Father; that it is not a servant, but a *Son*, that abideth ever; (*o*) that if the Son make his people free, then shall they be free indeed. Did any *prophets* assume such strange and authoritative language, and instead of rendering glory to God as the author of every good and perfect gift, attribute to their own efficiency the great things which God performed through their instrumentality? On one occasion, indeed, and but one, I believe, (*p*) Jesus says, that the Father is greater than he. But what a singular acknowledgment is that, if he be not "God manifested in the flesh!" Should we not consider as idiotic, or insane, any mere man who should tell us seriously, that the Supreme Being is greater than he?

The texts, also, in which our Lord asserts his pre-existence, connected with those in which he affirms his equality with his Father, furnish cogent evidence in favour of his true Divinity. This consequence is attempted to be weakened by a perfectly gratuitous hypothesis, namely, that he was taken up to heaven

(*n*) John, x. 30.

(*o*) John, viii. 35, 42, 58, &c.

(*p*) John, xvi. 28.

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for a short time to receive his instruction. Now here it is obvious to remark, that if it be true that Jesus Christ *went up* into heaven, and came down from heaven a little afterwards, it was incomparably more necessary (to prevent our adoption of erroneous opinions) to mention his *ascent* than his *descent*; yet the Scripture speaks frequently of the latter, never of the former. On this point allow me to lay before you Dr. Abbadie's plain and unforced illustration. Suppose we met with a stranger who should talk to us after this manner;—"I came from *China*; I go to *China*. Ye shall soon see me return where I was before. I departed from *China* and landed in this country; not to do my own business, but that of the *Emperor of China*. I came to do the will of my Father, even the Emperor of China: He is *my own Father*; (q) and no man (here) knoweth my Father but the Son, and they to whom the Son hath revealed him. Lo, I leave this country and go to the Emperor of China, for he sent me. Now that I am to return thither, what is it but that I was sent into this country? He that is of this country speaketh as the men of this country; but he that has come from *China* speaketh as one that came from China. In a little while longer ye shall not see me, because I return to my Father." Now, what is the natural impression which such language

(q) Vide John, v. 18. Πατέρα ἰδίον, his own or proper father, and Rom. viii. 32, ἰδίον υἱόν, his own or proper son.

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is calculated to make? Is it, that this man was a mere European, who had spent a few weeks in China, and had caught a glimpse of the Emperor? Or that he was really a native of China who expected soon to return thither; and had peculiar reasons for wishing to return, that he might receive the honour due to him as the son of the Emperor? It would be an insult to your understanding to make the application, to the uniform conduct and repeated declarations of our Lord.

Such conduct, and such declarations, were calculated to excite homage and worship: and how did Jesus Christ receive it? Paul and Barnabas, you will recollect, rent their garments when they were taken for gods, and restrained the people who wished to worship them. Peter, also, when the devout Cornelius “fell down at his feet and worshipped him,” forbade him, saying, “Stand up: I myself also am *a man*.” (r) In the same spirit the angel in the Apocalypse, when St. John prostrated himself to worship him, rejected the homage with horror, saying, “See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee, and with thy brethren who bear testimony to Jesus:

(r) Acts, xiv. 11—18. x. 25, 26. From this example it is plain that the distinction between *supreme* and *subordinate* worship, upon which so much stress has been recently laid, was unknown to the apostles of our Lord. For, it is evident from the story, that Cornelius did not worship Peter, as God, but as the *messenger of God*: and it is farther evident that Peter thought all external worship, even such as could in no sense be conceived to tend towards a Supreme Object, when paid to a *creature*, a *man*, however dignified by *office*, did infinitely prejudice the glory of the Creator.

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“*worship God.*” (s) But Jesus Christ tranquilly suffered Divine honours to be rendered him; commended the faith of the disciples who worshipped him, and who with Thomas called him their “Lord and their God;” upbraided this Thomas with his *unbelief*, yet suffered his *idolatry* to pass unreprieved; and even confuted those enemies who contested his own Deity and celestial origin. Was this the way to prove that he was nothing more than man?

Ubiquity belongs to none but God; yet Jesus Christ made promises which it was impossible to fulfil without this perfection. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there AM I in the midst of them.” “I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world.” (t) When Nathanae

(s) Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 9.

(t) Compare Matt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20, with Exod. xx. 24. The Socinian translators say the promises in the Gospel “are to be understood as limited to the apostolic age, and perhaps to the apostles themselves.” How did the Messiah acquire this temporary omnipresence, (say for 70 years,) to whom did he resign it, and what notices have we in Scripture of any such resignation? That is, what passages are to be found in Holy Writ which contradict the express declaration in Hebrews, xiii. 8, that “*Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever?*” Besides, let it be considered that omnipresence is an *infinite* attribute, and then two things will follow: First, It can never be communicated to a creature, because in that case it would be both finite and not finite; which is a palpable contradiction. Secondly, Since there can be no intermission of an infinite attribute, if our Lord possessed this omnipresence in the apostolic age, (which these gentlemen do not deny) he *must* be omnipresent in all ages. The reasonings which would set aside the declarations of omnipresence in Matthew, would just as effectually invalidate that in Exodus,



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went to him to ascertain if any “good thing could come out of Nazareth,” Jesus at once described his character: the language of the astonished Jew was, “Whence knowest thou me?” The reply of Jesus, “Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, *I saw thee*,” convinced Nathanael that he was the “*Son of God*,” because it evinced his omnipresence. The Messiah, instead of correcting the mistake (which he would naturally have done, had it been one), said, “Because I said unto thee, ‘*I saw thee under the fig-tree*,’ believest thou? Thou shalt see *greater things* than these:” (v) and doubtless he did: he might witness many more circumstances that showed how Jesus “knew even the thoughts of man;” (w) and might hear him authoritatively pronounce the forgiveness of sins, though “none can forgive sins but God only.” (x)

Indeed, the single circumstance of his never deceiving the Jews, who thought that by “calling himself the Son of God he made himself *equal with God*,” is sufficient, with inquirers of unbiassed minds, to set the question at rest. This was the cause, at least the ostensive cause, of all the maltreatment he experienced. It was for this he was apprehended, and tried as a blasphemer. The high priest adjured him most solemnly “by the living

(v) John, i. 48—51.

(w) Matt. xii. 25. Luke, vi. 8. John, ii. 24, 25. vi. 64.

(x) Mark, ii. 7—11.

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“ God that he would tell them whether he was *the Christ, the son of God;*” (y) clearly showing, on the one hand, that in the expectation of the Jews the Messiah was to possess Divine attributes; and, on the other, that none but a Divine Messiah could without blasphemy assume the title of “ the son of God.” If these were mistakes, why did not Jesus seize this opportunity of correcting them, especially when by so doing he would probably have avoided crucifixion? but instead of this, he persisted in what the high priest, as well as the other Jews, deemed blasphemy; (z) was therefore thought deserving of death, and suffered in consequence. It is admitted by all *Christians* (and as far as I know by all unbelievers), that he suffered *unjustly* : yet how could this be, if he were not what he professed himself to be, “ the Son of God,” equal to his Father, and “ possessing glory with him “ before the world existed?” (a) If he were a mere man, his life was a life of imposture; during his whole ministry he usurped honours to which he was not entitled; he died as an impostor, and kept up the delusion to the last by even deceiving a fellow-malefactor, who called him “ Lord,” and heaven his “ kingdom,” with vain promises of future happiness, (b) which he had no power to confer.

In opposition to this induction of particulars there cannot, as I conceive, be more than one argument set up, with any semblance of reason. It may be said,

(y) Matt. xxvi. 63.

(z) Matt. xxvi. 65.

(a) John, xvii. 5.

(b) Luke, xxii. 43.

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if Jesus Christ were really Divine, why did he not give such palpable evidences of it as could neither be doubted nor disputed? The answer is obvious. Had he furnished convincing proofs of his Godhead, they would not have been verbal declarations, but real exhibitions of his majesty and unlimited power; these would of course have restrained the Jews from putting him to death, agreeably to the assertion of Paul, "Had the princes of this world known, they would not have crucified *the Lord of Glory*;" (c) and in that case the principal object for which he visited this world, that of "taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself," would have been defeated.

I have just said there cannot be more than *one* opposing argument set up with any semblance of reason, because an argument of which Socinians are very fond, namely, "that because a doctrine is not revealed in the Gospels it is not true," is not only inapplicable to the present question, but is as trifling and childish as can well be conceived. For what does it amount to? Just this: If a proposition is not to be found in a certain assigned portion of Scripture, it is not divinely revealed in any other part of Scripture! How logically conclusive! Must every proposition of revealed truth be condensed into every portion of Holy Writ? Jesus Christ is no where, I think, in the four Gospels called a *High priest*: will these gentle-

(c) 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. See also, to this effect, the striking language of our Lord in Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

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men therefore affirm that he is not “ a High priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec?” Nor, as far as I recollect, is he any where in those Gospels denominated a *mediator* : will they, therefore, deny that “ there is one mediator between God and man, the “ man Christ Jesus?” Most of them admit his mediation; though for one allusion to that, in the New Testament, there will be found at least twenty to his Divinity.

III. The testimony of the apostles is decidedly in favour of the Divinity of our Lord.

Stephen, an apostle, and the first martyr, when dying invokes the “ Lord Jesus to receive his “ spirit.” The apostles in general perform their miracles not in the name of Jehovah, but in that of “ Jesus of Nazareth:” and they uniformly ascribe to him the epithets, the attributes, and the works which are peculiar to Deity. They tell us, that, conformably to prophecy, “ his name is Emmanuel, “ GOD *with us.*” (d) Moreover John turned “ many “ to the Lord their God.” (e) “ Christ is Lord of “ all.” (f) “ We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; and every one give an account “ of himself to GOD.” (g) “ The second man is “ the Lord from heaven.” (h) “ In him dwelleth all “ the fulness of the Deity bodily; and he is the head “ of all principality and power.” (i) Jesus Christ is

(d) Matt. i. 23.

(e) Luke, i. 16, 76.

(f) Acts, x. 36.

(g) Rom. xiv. 10, 12.

(h) 1 Cor. xv. 47.

(i) Col. ii. 9, 10. See also the initial salutation in Paul's Epistle

“ *Lord of Glory.*” “ *For by him ALL THINGS WERE*  
 “ *CREATED, that are in heaven and that are on earth,*  
 “ *visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or*  
 “ *dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things*  
 “ *were created by him, and for him; and he is before*  
 “ *all things, and by him all things subsist.*” (k) He  
 is “ the first and the last, and he that *lived and be-*  
 “ *came dead, and lives for ever and ever, and has the*  
 “ *keys of death and hades.*” (l) “ The Lamb is *Lord*  
 “ *of lords, and King of kings,*” a peculiar title of  
 Jehovah. (m) He “ *searcheth the reins and the*  
 “ *hearts, and will give to every one according to his*  
 “ *works.*” (n) He “ *knows the works*” and conduct  
 of all churches.” (o) “ He promises to bestow upon  
 “ his people *eternal life:*” (p) while he will “ con-  
 “ *sume the unrighteous with the breath of his*  
 “ *mouth.*” (q) And he was the Logos or Word of  
 “ God who was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”  
 and of whom John says, “ In the beginning was the

to the Galatians, “ Paul an apostle (or *one sent*) not from man,  
 “ nor by man, but by *Jesus Christ.*” And let it be farther recol-  
 lected that the apostles usually mention Christ by the title of  
 Κυριος “ the Lord;” the very word which in the Septuagint (from  
 which they quoted) is employed as equivalent to *Jehovah*. This title  
 Zanchie assures us is, “ in the writings of the apostles, simply and  
 “ absolutely ascribed to Christ, at least a thousand times,” and  
 generally so as to import *necessary existence*.

(k) 1 Cor. ii. 8. James, ii. 1. Col. i. 16, 17. (l) Rev. i. 17, 18.

(m) Rev. xvii. 14. Deut. x. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

(n) Rev. ii. 2.

(o) Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19. iii. 1, 8, 15.

(p) John, x. 28.

(q) 2 Thess. ii. 8.

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“ Word, and the Word was *with God*, and the  
 “ Word *was God*: all things were made by Him,  
 “ and without Him was not a *single thing* made that  
 “ was made.” (r)

Quotations tending to establish the same point might be extended almost indefinitely ; but if the real object of inquiry be to arrive at truth, the preceding will be quite sufficient. Here again, indeed, the merits of the question might be very safely made to turn upon the text last cited. For, taking *Λογος* (a

(r) John, i. 1, 3, 14. Consult also 1 Thess. iv. 14, and Tit. ii. 13. To diminish the force of these proofs from the language of the apostles, I have been reminded that in the Acts of the Apostles, if not in their Epistles, they usually call Jesus Christ *a man*; and farther that they usually in argumentation speak of him as a man; whence it is inferred that they knew not that he was Divine, but acknowledged that he was a man. Here, it is obvious to reply, as Dr. Horsley has long ago done, that “ according to the faith which  
 “ I defend, Christ is truly a man as well as God. It is no wonder  
 “ therefore, that he should be mentioned as a man, when nothing  
 “ in the narrative, or in the argument, requires that his Divinity  
 “ should be particularly brought to view. To the first argument in  
 “ particular, it is a farther answer, that it was the style of all the  
 “ sacred writers, and it is the style of all writers to name things  
 “ rather after their *appearances* than their internal forms. The  
 “ tempter you know, in the Mosaic history of the fall, is called  
 “ the serpent; and is not once mentioned by any other name. The  
 “ three angels, who appeared to Abraham in the form of men, are  
 “ called men, throughout the story. To the second argument in  
 “ particular, it is a farther answer, that, as the scheme of man’s  
 “ redemption required the incarnation of the Son of God, the  
 “ apostles would often find it necessary, in reasoning upon that  
 “ scheme, and in argumentation in defence of it, to insist on his  
 “ humanity.” See also Abbadie on the Divinity, sect. vi. chap. 3, &c.

word not borrowed from the writings of Plato or of Philo, as some pretend, but from the Jewish Scriptures) (s) to signify, as it doubtless does in this passage, the divine and substantial *Word of God, the MESSIAH*, we are hence assured, 1st, That he was in the beginning; that is, that he already was and did exist when things began to be created. 2dly, That in that state of his existence, before the creation of the world, he was partaker of the Divine glory and happiness. 3dly, That he *was God* by participation of the Divine nature with the Father. 4thly, That *not a single being* (οὐδὲς ἐν) was made without him: he made all creatures without exception; and consequently *he is not a creature.* (t)

(s) Parkburst's Greek Lexicon. Λόγος, xvi.

(t) The followers of Socinus are frequently introducing new translations and new interpretations of this passage: but if we allow them to be received, we must also admit *two* very extraordinary and almost incredible things, namely, that Ignatius and others who lived very near John's time, and were therefore most likely to know his meaning, should so widely mistake it; and that all Christians (or at least the great body) should err so extremely in an important article of faith for almost 1600 years, that no man understood this text rightly before Socinus. This latter consideration would be enough of itself to startle any modest man: but Socinus seems more inclined to boast of it; for, when speaking of this very verse, he says, "Quorum verus sensus omnes prorsus, qui quidem extarent, explanatores latuisse videtur."

Another text equally decisive with the above, and which also the rejectors of the Divinity of Christ have endeavoured to weaken by a most extraordinary construction, is Phil. ii. 5—10. For a most masterly refutation of their strained interpretation, see "*Abbadie on the Divinity of Jesus Christ*," sect. iii. chap. 7. This book,



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In estimating the force of these texts, let it be considered that they are selected from the writings of men whose great business was to destroy *idolatry*, and implant the true worship of God upon its ruins; and that it was foretold their description of “the way, the truth, and the life,” (v) should be so obvious that “the wayfaring men, though fools, should not err therein.” (w) If Jesus Christ were a mere man, the predictions of the prophets are in this respect, again, not accomplished, and we are yet left to wander without any infallible guide; for, on that supposition, the Bible, instead of being so plain and perspicuous that “he who runs may read” and understand it, if he read with singleness of heart, is the most obscure and delusive book in the world; and the Christian dispensation, instead of having eradicated idolatry, has given birth to an idolatry, more refined, it is true, but at the same time more prevalent, more formed for universality and permanence, than any idolatry that ever before existed! (x)

which I never saw till just as this 3d edition was passing through the press, I beg to recommend most cordially, as, on the whole, the most valuable and invulnerable work on the subject, I have read.

(v) John, xiv. 6.

(w) Is. xxxv. 8.

(x) Being obliged to regard brevity, I have omitted all those reasonings in favour of the Divinity of our Lord, which are deduced from his miraculous conception. To such as wish to consider this branch of the argument, I would beg to recommend the striking passage from Cassian quoted by Hooker in § 32 of his Discourse on Justification, Archbishop Tillotson’s 45th and 46th Sermons, a very able pamphlet entitled “Jesus of Nazareth *the Son of God*,” by

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There is another class of texts which become divested of all their propriety and importance, and sink into mere trifling, if the Divinity of Jesus Christ be denied: I mean those which represent to us in such glowing terms the love and condescension of the Redeemer. If Christ were in the "form of God, equal with God, and very God;" then it was an act of infinite love and condescension in him to become *man* and die for us. But if he were no more than a creature, surely it was no such amazing condescension to undertake so noble and sublime a work as being the Saviour of mankind; a work which would advance him to be Lord and Judge of the world;—cause him to be for ever admired, revered, and adored by men and angels,—and highly exalted and glorified by God himself. If either the work of redemption was too stupendous for a creature to undertake, or the honours of it were too high for a creature to aspire after; then, certainly, the very notion of condescension is merged and lost, upon every hypothesis which does not make Christ truly and properly God, God eternal. In fact, "to become man, to suffer and die for the redemption of the world, and to be made the Lord and Judge both of the quick and of the dead, can be an act of condescending love and goodness only

Mr. R. Alliot of Nottingham, and Bishop Horsley's "Sermon on the incarnation," published in his most interesting and decisive volume of "Tracts in controversy with Dr. Priestley." The doctrine of the miraculous conception was asserted and defended by Justin Martyr. See his 2d Apol. § 28, 30, 41, 43.

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“ in God. So that *to deny the Divinity of Christ alters*  
 “ *the very foundation of Christianity*, and destroys all  
 “ the powerful arguments of the love, humility, and  
 “ condescension of our Lord, which are the peculiar  
 “ motives of the Gospel.” (y)

IV. The prevailing opinion among Christians during the first three centuries was, that Jesus Christ was really a Divine Person, and not a mere man.

I assume it here as a position which cannot with any justice be disputed, that the opinions held by the majority of real and pious Christians in the early ages, when, as Jerome finely observes, “ the blood of Christ “ was yet warm in the breasts of Christians, and the “ faith and spirit of religion were brisk and vigorous,” were those that were taught by the apostles, and constituted the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. The observable harmony and unanimity of the several churches in their most public acts is a circumstance which irresistibly confirms this position. It is scarcely probable that any large church of those early ages should vary, in things of moment, from the apostolical doctrines: and it is quite absurd to imagine that *all* the churches should combine in the same error, and conspire together to corrupt the doctrine of Christ. This argument is much and justly insisted upon both by Irenæus and Tertullian against the heretics of their respective times. (z) They both affirm that the true disciple (that is, according to

(y) Sherlock's *Vindication of the Defence of Stillingfleet*, p. 268.

(z) Iren. I. iii. c. 3. I. iv. c. 53—59, Tertul. *Præscript.* c. 20, 28.

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their own interpretation, one who believes that He who wrought their salvation upon earth was God) “is a “ follower of the *public* doctrine of the church.”

Now, they are well known facts, that soon after the middle of the first century (that is, about A. D. 60 and 72), Cerinthus and Ebion impugned the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ; that John wrote his Gospel with a view to refute their errors; and that both were condemned for openly impugning this doctrine, by the whole church at that time, and frequently afterwards, *before* the establishment of Christianity by Constantine: this doctrine being then reckoned a fundamental and essential part of the Gospel faith. It is also equally notorious, that Theodotus, Artemon, Berrillus, Paul of Samosata, and Arius, did in succession, before the year 320, deny the *proper Divinity* of Jesus Christ in a greater or less degree, making him a *creature*; that they were all in their turns censured by the church: the sentiments of the latter, for example, being strongly censured at the council of Nice, by 315 out of 318 bishops, the wisest, worthiest, and every way most excellent, which the Christian world could then furnish, (a) called together out of Europe, Asia, and Africa; constituting a free council under no secular influence, or awe of superior human control. Reverting to the first of these deniers of Christ's Divinity, the substance of his opinion was, that Jesus and Christ were two persons: Jesus a mere man, con-

(a) Euseb. de Vit. Constantin. l. iii. c. 7, 9.

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ceived, in the natural way, of Joseph and Mary; Christ a celestial spirit, which descended from above, and resided in the man Jesus, not constantly, but occasionally. Here the proper Divinity of our Lord was denied; and this was condemned, as error and heresy, by the bishops of Asia, and others of Cerinthus's contemporaries, who went in a body to St. John, and importuned him to bear his testimony against these sentiments. (b) Now the only question for consideration relative to Cerinthus is this. Was he the first who truly understood that doctrine of the new religion which respected the *person* of its founder; or had the great body of the churches which were converted by the apostles received from them the true doctrines, and was Cerinthus the first who had sufficient boldness to promulgate erroneous sentiments? This question admits but of one rational answer; and that will accord with the decision of the primitive Christians against Cerinthus. Similar observations will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Ebion, and the other heresiarchs down to Arius: I beg to confirm them by a remarkable concession of Mr. Bayle's. He allows that, "in the days of the apostles or their disciples, "it had been easy to detect those who gave the Scriptures a wrong interpretation, because the infallibility "of the apostles (who might have been consulted by "word or by letter,) and the fresh remembrance of

(b) Victorin. in Assoc. Bibl. PP. Tom. i. p. 576. Hieronym. Prolog. in Matt. p. 3. opp. Tom. iv. Ed. Bened.

“ the verbal instructions they had given their disciples  
 “ and pastors whom themselves had consecrated, furnished ready means for clearing any doubt, or disputed point.” (c)

It would be easy to cite proofs that the sentiment of *whole churches* in the primitive times, agreed, on the subject of Christ's Divinity, with what is now denominated the orthodox doctrine. But I shall select only two. And first let me direct your attention to the epistle written by the church of Smyrna to other churches, in which they describe the sufferings and martyrdom of Polycarp; for there is related this remarkable circumstance: viz. That as soon as Polycarp was dead the Jews suggested to the heathen judge the expediency of not permitting the Christians to take the martyr's body, “ lest they should forsake their crucified master, and begin to worship Polycarp,” “ not considering (add those early Christians taught by a bishop who was the disciple of St. John) that we can never either forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the whole world, the righteous for the ungodly, or worship any other. For Him, as the Son of God, we worship; but the martyrs we only love, as the disciples and followers of our Lord.” (d)

To this remarkable testimony allow me to add that of Caius, who, in his book called “ the Labyrinth ”

(c) Bayle's Sup. to Phil. Comment. p. 692.

(d) Smyrn. Eccles. Epist. ap. Euseb. lib. iv. cap. 15. Wake's Fathers, p. 150.

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written against Artemon, in refutation of the assertion that Artemon's doctrine was coeval with Christianity, points first to the then well-known sentiments of *Justin*, *Miltiades*, *Tatian*, *Clemens*, *Irenæus*, *Melito*, in favour of Christ's Divinity, and then asks, "How many  
 " Psalms, Hymns, and Canticles were written from  
 " the beginning by the brethren, and transcribed by  
 " the faithful, in which Christ the Word of God is celebrated for no other than God indeed? And these  
 " being adopted in the churches, how is it possible  
 " that our ancestors until the time of Victor should  
 " have so preached, when the true ecclesiastical sentiment for so many years is certainly known unto  
 " all the world? How can they thus shamelessly report  
 " of Victor, when they know *for certainty* that Victor  
 " excommunicated Theodotus the Tanner, who denied  
 " the Divinity of Christ, because he was the first who  
 " affirmed that Christ was a mere man? If Victor,  
 " as they report, had been of their blasphemous opinion, how is it likely that he would have excommunicated Theodotus?" (e)

(e) Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 28. In farther describing these early heretics, Caius shows that there was an awful similarity between their practices, and those of many modern rejectors of Christ's Divinity. "They corrupted the Holy Scriptures without  
 " any reverence; they rejected the canon of the ancient faith; they  
 " remain ignorant of Christ, not searching simply what the Holy  
 " Scripture affirms, but exercising themselves and sifting it syllogistically to impugn the Divinity of Christ. So, if any reasoned with  
 " them out of Holy Writ, forthwith they demanded whether it were a  
 " conjunct or a simple kind of syllogism..... They abuse the art of



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Having thus shown that in the early ages the denial of Christ's Divinity was condemned as heretical and dangerous, while whole churches avowed the great truth, and formed their prayer and praise accordingly; I shall proceed to inform you what were the sentiments of the chief antenicene Fathers with respect to this important doctrine; that you may know how they, who were doubtless better acquainted with the original language of the New Testament than we are, interpreted it: and may see how completely *their* sentiments accord with those now maintained by a very great proportion of pious men.

I quote first from IGNATIUS, who wrote, at latest, about the year 107. "Be not led aside (says he) by "strange doctrines, nor by antiquated tales, which "are unprofitable. For, if we yet live according to "Judaism, it is equivalent to declaring that we have "not accepted grace: for the most holy prophets lived "according to Christ Jesus. And for that cause

"infidels to the establishing their heretical opinion, and corrupt the  
 "simplicity of the Scriptures. To prove that I do not affirm this untruly,  
 "examine their copies: compare them one with another, and note their  
 "contrariety. The books of *Asclepiades* agree not with those of *Theodo-*  
*tus*; nor those of *Hermophilus* with either: nor are the copies of *Apol-*  
*lonius* at concord among themselves . . . . . Either these persons  
 "persuade themselves that the Scriptures were not indited by the Holy  
 "Spirit, and in that case they are infidels; or else they think them-  
 "selves *wiser* than the Holy Spirit, thus showing themselves possessed  
 "of a devil. Such things they cannot deny, because we possess them  
 "in their writing: nor can they show us who instructed *them*, who deli-  
 "vered them *such* Scriptures, or whence they translated *their* copies."

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“ were they persecuted, being *inspired by the grace of*  
 “ *Christ* that the unbelievers might be convinced that  
 “ there is one God who hath manifested himself by  
 “ his Son Jesus Christ, who is his *Eternal Word*.” (f)

JUSTIN MARTYR has the following passage, preserved by Dr. Grabe: “ When man’s nature had  
 “ contracted corruption, it was necessary that he who  
 “ would save it should do away the principle of corruption. But this could not be done without uniting *essential life* with the nature so corrupted, to  
 “ do away the corruption, and ever after to immortalize the corrupt nature. Wherefore it was meet  
 “ that the *Word should become incarnate* to deliver us  
 “ from the death of natural corruption.” (g)

The same writer, in one of his “ Apologies,” says,  
 “ The pagans tax us with atheism; and we frankly  
 “ confess the charge, that with respect to the gods in  
 “ worship among you we *are* atheists. But we are far  
 “ otherwise in respect of the most true God, the  
 “ *Father* of righteousness, purity, and every virtue, a  
 “ God infinitely removed from the least mixture or  
 “ spot of evil: Him, and his *only begotten* SON, together with the SPIRIT, who spake by the prophets, we  
 “ worship and adore: and *our* way of worshipping is  
 “ in spirit and in truth.” (h)

(f) Ignat. ad Magnes. s. viii.

(g) Grab. Spicileg. vol. ii. p. 17.

(h) Just. Apol. ii. § 6. See also Dial. cum. Tryp. § 17, and 28, where Justin illustrates the generation of the Son of God, by a

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IRENÆUS treats very forcibly and fully respecting the Deity of Christ; but I shall only extract two passages. After remarking that the Son of God, and Word of the Father, became man that he might “give salvation to *his own creature*,” he proceeds thus: “Therefore, as I said before, he *united man to God*. “For if it were not man that should overcome the “adversary of man, the enemy would not have been “rightly vanquished: and, on the other hand, if it “were not God to give the salvation, we could not be “firmly possessed of it. Besides, if man had not “been united to God, he could never have been partaker of incorruption. So it was necessary that a “mediator between God and man should bring both “together into amity and concord by his own proximity to both, that so he might present man to God, “and notify God to man.” (i) The same Father, when speaking of the miracles which were wrought in his time, assures us they were effected “not by enchantments, or by invocation of angels, but by *calling on the name of Jesus Christ*.” This, by the way, is farther manifest from the prayer for the Energumens, in the 8th book of the *Apostolical Constitutions*,

reference to “fire, which, without diminution of its substance, “kindles another.” “God of God, as fire of fire.”

(i) Irenæus, l. iii. c. 18, l. ii. c. 55. It may not be amiss to add that Irenæus contends in lib. iv. cap. 52, “that they who make “Christ the Son of Joseph, attain neither remission of sins, nor “the adoption of the sons of God, nor so much as the right of a “blessed resurrection.” This is also testified by Feuardentius.

which is directed personally to Christ under the title of "*the only begotten God.*"

ATHENAGORAS, who flourished in the second century, speaks of Christians as "men that made small account of the present life, but were intent only upon contemplating God, and knowing his *Word* who is from him; what union *the Son has with the Father*, what communion *the Father has with the Son*; what the Spirit is, and what the union and distinction are of such so united, the Spirit, the Son, and the Father." (k)

TERTULLIAN understood the phrase *Son of God* as applied to Christ to mean the same as *God of God*; as is obvious from many parts of his writings. (l) There is still extant a creed of his, which runs thus: "We believe in one God; but under this dispensation which we call the economy, that the *one God hath a Son which is his Word, who proceeded from him, and by whom all things were made.* He was sent from the Father to the Virgin, and was born of her both God and man, *Son of man and Son of God* — who, afterwards, according to his promise, sent from the Father the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is the rule which has come down to us from the beginning of the Gospel." (m) And again, "What

(k) Athenag. Legat. 1. xi. p. 46. Ed. Ox.

(l) See especially Tertul. Apol., c. 21.

(m) Tert. adv. Prax. c. 2. p. 5, 6. Welchman Ed.

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“ is it that the Gospel has done, what is the substance  
 “ of the New Testament, extending the Law and the  
 “ Prophets as far as John, if, from thenceforwards,  
 “ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, are  
 “ not believed to make one God ?” (n)

ORIGEN also, in his writings against Celsus, furnishes many assertions which are unequivocal and decisive. Thus, he affirms: first, that Christ was the *uncreated* Son of God: secondly, that the Maker of the world is to be worshipped: thirdly, that Christ is the Maker of the world. He preserves a precise distinction between creatures and their Creator; and he brings them together into comparison as to the respect that is due to them. He next says that we ought not to worship any creatures, but only the Creator: that we can only lift up our eyes to the Creator of all the magnificence of nature, to see whom we ought to admire, serve, and adore. Then he proclaims Jesus Christ as *the Creator of the Universe*; that God working with him said, at the Creation, “ Let there be light: let *us* make man.” Nay, he is yet more distinct in the statement of his opinions. He says that the Father is indeed eminently God; but that the worship of the Son is not an inferior but a *Divine* worship: he applies the same expression to the adora-

(n) Tert. adv. Prax. c. 31. p. 102.—The collections of Creeds and Doxologies given by Bingham, and indeed many of those that are drawn together by Whiston, furnish ample proof of the early prevalence of this momentous truth.

tion of Jesus Christ by the Magi, that he does to the worship of God: he speaks of the Father and the Son being jointly worshipped as one God: he admits the worship of the Son in his distinct individual character; attributing to him immutability, omnipresence, and other qualities which are characteristic only of the Most High. (o)

CYPRIAN, when arguing against the invalidity of heretical baptisms, inquires how the subject of such baptism can become the temple of God, saying, "If he be thereby made the temple of God, I would ask of what Divine person is it? Is it of God the Creator? He could not be so, if he believed not in him. Is it of Christ? Neither can he be his temple, while he denies *Christ to be God*? Is it then of the Holy Spirit? But since the three are one, how can the Holy Spirit have friendship with him that is at enmity with either Father or Son?" (p) This Father abounds with passages in which the Divinity of Christ is asserted.

NOVATIAN expresses himself as follows: "If God the Father save none but through God, then no one can be saved by God the Father, who does not confess that Christ is God; in whom, and by whom, the Father promises to give salvation. Wherefore

(o) For the references in proof of this, see Mr. F. Cunningham's Hulsean Prize Essay on the Books of Origen against Celsus, p. 40, 41. See also for some striking passages, Bull. Defens. Fid. Nicen. sect. ii. cap. 9.

(p) Cyprian. Ep. 73 ad Jubaian.

“ very justly, whosoever acknowledges him to be  
 “ God is in the way to be saved by Christ who is  
 “ God; and whosoever does not acknowledge him to  
 “ be God forfeits salvation, because he *cannot otherwise*  
 “ *have it than in Christ as God.*” (q)

DIONYSIUS, bishop of Rome, after censuring Marcion’s *tritheistic* doctrine as diabolical, says,  
 “ Nor are they less to blame, who think *the Son a*  
 “ *creature*, and who suppose the Lord to have come  
 “ into being, as if he were one of the things that  
 “ were really made.” (r)

His cotemporary, DIONYSIUS of *Alexandria* (both flourishing about A. D. 259), expressed himself thus:  
 “ The Father being eternal, the Son must be eternal  
 “ too, Light of light.—The names mentioned by me  
 “ are undivided and inseparable: when I named the  
 “ Father before I mentioned the Son, I signified the  
 “ Son in the Father. If any of my false accusers  
 “ suspect that because I called God creator and  
 “ former of all things, I made him creator of Christ,  
 “ let him consider that I before styled him *Father*  
 “ and so *the Son was included in him.*” (s)

The case of this Dionysius of Alexandria evinces very plainly of what great moment the belief of Christ’s Divinity was reckoned in the middle of the third century. In controversy with the Sabellians, he ex-

(q) Novat. c. 12, p. 36. (r) Apud Athanas. vol. i. p. 231.

(s) Dionys. Alex. apud Athanas. de Sententia Dionysii, p. 254.



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pressed himself rather unwarily, and thence became suspected of leaning too far towards the opposite extreme, and of holding inadequate notions of the Deity of Christ. Such was the jealousy with which this doctrine was guarded, that the whole Christian world were thrown into alarm on account of the supposed heresy of so eminent a man as this Dionysius. Complaint was brought from Egypt as far as Italy: and though the Bishop of Rome had not at that time any authority over the bishop of Alexandria, the aged prelate of the latter place made known to the whole world through the medium of the bishop of Rome, that he never intended "the least injury to the Divinity of Christ, or to his consubstantiality; but himself believed them, as sincerely and fully as any other man could." (*t*)

That these were not the sentiments of a few individuals, but of the great body of the Christian church in the primitive ages, is evident both from the remarks

(*t*) See Waterland on the Trinity, p. 352, Ed. 1800. Consult also, (since I have been obliged to omit many quotations from Barnabas, Polycarp, Theophilus, Clemens Alexandrinus, &c.) for a more full account of the opinions of the Christians of the first three centuries respecting the Divinity of Christ, Abp. Wake's "Apostolical Fathers," Mr. Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*, book x, ch. 4, and book xiii. ch. 2. Bishop Horsley's "Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley, upon the Historical Question of the Belief of the First Ages in our Lord's Divinity," and Mr. Badcock's deservedly celebrated articles in confutation of Dr. Priestley, in the *Monthly Review* for 1783.

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which precede these quotations, and from the testimony of cotemporary heathen authors. (*v*) In a former letter I laid before you two frequently cited passages from Lucian and Pliny; (*w*) from which it appears that the grand crime of the first Christians consisted in singing “hymns to Christ as *unto a God*.” It was for their obstinate adherence to this idolatrous worship, as the heathens esteemed it, that they were persecuted and brought to martyrdom. Now if this were a calumny, which, if they had not rendered Divine honours to Jesus Christ, it must have been, they would not have rested quietly under it, especially when its consequences were so dreadful. They would have reiterated again and again, ‘We do not *worship* Jesus Christ, as you suppose: we celebrate his memory and his virtues, it is true; but we consider him as merely a creature, and therefore never transfer to him the worship due to God alone.’ The admirable apologists of Christianity, in the early ages, eagerly seized and refuted every the slightest calumny; yet upon this momentous point, in which, if Jesus Christ had not been God, their conduct would have been most odious and censurable, they attempted no defence. They, who could not be persuaded to bend to the statue of the Cæsars, justified by their silence the accusation of adoring a crucified malefactor. They

(*v*) I might adduce the authority of Socinus himself, who assured his disciples that to *worship Christ* was the ancient and *universal* practice of saints and martyrs. Ad Matt. Radec. Epist. 3, p. 391.

(*w*) See vol. i. Letter ix.

would not offer incense to idols, but affirmed that “ whatever was exalted above the standard of civil “ worship (or respect) in imitation of the Divine excellency was directly made an idol;” (x) yet they worshipped one who had died ignominiously; and, confiding in strength which *he* would impart to them, despised the malice of their enemies, and the wrath of emperors, and cheerfully submitted to the most agonizing sufferings, terminated only by death, rather than attempt to wipe off the reproach of adoring the “ malefactor Jesus.” Admit that Jesus is “ the “ Christ, the son of God,” that though “ dead he “ is alive for evermore,” and that he is still “ head “ over all things to the church,” “ dwelling in all “ hearts by faith,” and enabling his faithful disciples “ in all things to be *more* than conquerors through “ him that loved them,” (y) and the conduct of the martyrs of the primitive times is intelligible and defensible: deny it, and you reduce them to a level with idiots; and have moreover to account for the remarkable phenomenon of a church whose foundations were laid in error, which was supported by enthusiasm and folly, but opposed by learning, philosophy, and the strongest secular power, being “ built up” notwithstanding, and becoming the “ joy and rejoicing of “ the whole earth.”

Here, then, I beg to close the evidence, not because

(x) Vide Tert. de Idol. c.15. Greg. Naz. Or. 38, in Nat. Chris.

(y) Rom. viii. 35, 37.

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there is not more to produce, but because I deem the producing of more totally unnecessary. The Jewish prophets foretold that the Messiah would be “the Mighty God,” “God with us,”—John the precursor of Jesus was the harbinger “of the Most High,”—Jesus Christ himself asserted his equality with the Father,—his apostles ascribed to him the works and attributes of Deity,—the great body of professing Christians in the first three centuries lived and died in the persuasion that he was “one with God,”—the primitive martyrs resigned their lives in attestation of this great truth, and while they suffered “rejoiced in God their Saviour;” and they derived their conviction from the personal instruction of the apostles, or from the perusal of the word of God. On these grounds we affirm that the doctrine is *true*. If it were not, it would follow that the most diligent perusers of that book which is given to be “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths,” (2) have lost the truth, while Mahometans, who do not read the Bible, have found it: for if Jesus Christ be not God, *Mahomet* has described his character more correctly than the apostles. This is his language. “They are infidels who declare that God is Christ: Christ the son of Mary is no more than God’s envoy. Christians say Christ is the Son of God; how are they infatuated: far be it from God that he should have a Son. Jesus is no other than a servant. O Jesus, son of Mary, dost thou persuade

(2) Ps. cxix. 105.

“mankind to put thee in the place of God?” (a) And truly, if he have so done, and be not essentially God, it *must* follow (though it is a horrid inference) that Mahomet, even Mahomet the impostor, was more faithful, more wise, and more zealous for God’s glory than was Jesus Christ himself!!

I cannot, however, pass from the subject before us without entreating you to bear in mind that it is, strictly speaking, *fundamental*. Different religions are (as was suggested in a preceding letter) distinguished one from another by their having different objects of worship, and proposing different grounds of hope. Considered in this light, the religion of him who admits and him who rejects the Deity of Christ, are as essentially different as the religions of the Jew and the Christian. This is no uncandid remark; but one founded in the nature of things, and justified by the conduct of both parties. If Jesus Christ be a mere man, those who worship him are guilty of idolatry: in that case the Socinians rightly call them *idolaters*, and, for aught I can see to the contrary, were justifiable upon their own principles in proposing (as they did in the reign of Charles the Second) (b) to reduce the two schemes of Socinianism

(a) Sale’s Koran, *passim*.

(b) I have been called upon to furnish proofs of this singular fact; and feel no hesitation in complying with the requisition.

A negotiation was opened on the part of our English Unitarians, with his Excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, Ambassador of the Emperor of Morocco at the English Court, in order to form an alliance

and Mahometanism into one consistent aggregate. If, on the other hand, Jesus Christ be God incarnate,

with the Mahometan Prince, for the more effectual propagation of the Unitarian principles.

The two Unitarian divines, who undertook this singular treaty, address the Ambassador, and the Mussulmen of his suite, as “vo-  
“taries and fellow worshippers of the sole Supreme Deity.” They return thanks to God, that he hath preserved the Emperor of Morocco, and his subjects, in the excellent knowledge of one only Sovereign God, who hath no distinction, nor plurality of persons; and in many other wholesome doctrines.

They say, that they with their pens defend the faith of one Supreme God; and that God raised up Mahomet to do the same with the sword, as a scourge on idolizing Christians. They therefore style themselves the fellow champions with the Mahometans for these truths. They offer their assistance to purge the Koran of certain corruptions and interpolations, which, after the death of Mahomet, had crept into his papers, of which the Koran was composed. For of Mahomet they think too highly, to suppose that he could be guilty of the many repugnances, which are to be found in the writings that go under his name. This work they declare themselves willing to undertake, for the vindication of Mahomet's glory. They intimate that the corrections which they would propose, would render the Koran more consistent; not with itself only, but with the Gospel of Christ, of which they say Mahomet pretended to be but a preacher. They tell the Ambassador, that the Unitarian Christians form a great and considerable people. To give weight to the assertion, they enumerate the heresiarchs of all ages who have opposed the Trinity, from Paulus Samosatensis, down to Faustus Socinus, and the leaders of the Polishian fraternity. They celebrate the modern tribes of Arians, as asserters of the proper unity of God; and they close the honourable list with the Mahometans themselves. All these, they say, maintain the faith of one God: and “why should we forget to add you, “Mahometans, who also consent with us in the belief of one only “Supreme Deity.”

then “ every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ  
“ is come *in the flesh*, is of God; and every spirit

Such is the substance of a letter which they presented to the Ambassador, with some Latin manuscripts respecting the differences between Christianity and the Mahometan religion, and containing an ample detail of the Unitarian tenets. They apply to the Mussulman, as to a person of known discernment in spiritual and sublime matters: and they entreat him to communicate the import of their manuscripts to the consideration of the fittest persons among his countrymen.

This singular epistle may be seen entire in Leslie's *Socinian Controversy* discussed.

Dr. Horsley, in whose controversial writings with Dr. Priestley this is inserted (Letter 16, page 307, ed. 3), by way of stamping its authenticity has added a note, in which he says, that in consequence of Dr. Priestley's questioning the veracity of it, he examined the Archbishop's library at Lambeth, from whence the copy was originally taken, where he found it in a thin folio, under the mark 673, among the *Codices MSS. Tenisoniani*; and entered in the catalogue, under the article *Socinians*, by the title of *Systema Theologiæ Socinianæ*.

On the preceding leaf are these remarks:—“ These are the  
“ original papers which a cabal of Socinians in London offered to  
“ present to the Ambassador of the King of Fez and Morocco, when  
“ he was taking leave of England, August 1682.—The said Ambassador refused to receive them, after having understood that they  
“ concerned religion.—The agent of the Socinians was Monsieur  
“ Virze.—Sir Charles Cottrell, Knt. Master of the Ceremonies,  
“ then present, desired he might have them, which was granted;  
“ and he brought them, and gave them to me, Thomas Tenison, then  
“ Vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields, Middlesex.”

Dr. Horsley adds, by way of farther confirmation, “ I do most  
“ solemnly aver, that I have this day, (Jan. 15, 1789,) compared  
“ the letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, as published by Dr. Leslie, in  
“ his *Socinian Controversy* discussed, with the MS. in the Arch-



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“ that confesseth that Jesus Christ is *not* come *in the flesh* is not of God:” “ whosoever denieth the Son hath *not* the Father,” while he “ that acknowledgeth the Son *hath the Father also*:” “ he that hath the Son hath life, and he that *hath not the Son hath not life* ;” (c) they are as opposite in their nature as the dead and the living, and it is as impossible for them to unite cordially together in religious worship. The one party contends, and contends naturally, that by worshiping a *creature* he should dishonour God, to whom alone worship is due: the other affirms as naturally, and (as I trust you will now allow) more consistently with the uniform tenour of the Gospel, that, by withholding worship from the Saviour, he should deny his Divine perfections, dishonour and degrade Him, and thus lose his title to eternal glory.

The character the Redeemer *now* sustains renders this a matter of infinite moment. Jesus *has* “ as-

“ bishop’s library, and find that the printed copy, with the exception of some trivial typographical errors, which in no way affect the sense, and are such as any reader will discover and correct for himself, is exactly conformable to the MS., without the omission or addition of a single word.”

(c) 1 John, iv, 2, 3. ii. 23. v. 12. In the first of these passages, the phrase *in the flesh* either clearly indicates a possibility or capability of other ways of coming, or it is nugatory. If it be not merely expletive, which is not easily to be admitted, it is, therefore, *decisively* in favour of the orthodox doctrine respecting the person of Christ. The Socinian interpretation of the passage is refuted by Bishop Horsley, Letters, p. 120, and by Abbadie, sect. iii. cap. 2, 10.

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“ cended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand  
 “ of his Father,” “ far above all principalities and  
 “ powers.” Here he was our *prophet* and teacher;  
 there he is incessantly pleading for his people; nay,  
 there he both intercedes as our *High Priest*, and sits  
 and reigns as *King*. He governs all things in heaven  
 and on earth, that he may defend his Church, adorn  
 her with his Spirit, and procure and accomplish her  
 eternal salvation. But “ from thence he shall come  
 “ to judge the quick and the dead:” “ for the  
 “ Father judgeth no man; but hath given all judgment  
 “ to his Son, that all may *honour the Son as they*  
 “ *honour the Father.*” (d) May the contemplation of  
 this great event stimulate us, my friend, sedulously  
 to seek, and heartily to embrace, the truth. For,  
 “ behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall  
 “ see him, and they also which pierced him.” (e)  
 Then will *they* “ say to the mountains and rocks,  
 “ Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that  
 “ sitteth upon the throne, even from the *wrath of*  
 “ *the Lamb*; for the great day of his wrath is come,  
 “ and who shall be able to stand?” (f) while the  
 meek and humble and upright followers of Jesus will  
 exclaim in grateful triumph, “ Lo, this is OUR GOD;  
 “ we have waited for him, and he will save us: this  
 “ is THE LORD, we have waited for him; we will be  
 “ glad and rejoice in his salvation!” (g)

(d) John, v. 22, 23.

(e) Rev. i. 7.

(f) Rev. vi. 16, 17.

(g) Is. xxv. 9.

## LETTER XVI.

*On the Nature of Conversion, and its Necessity.*

THE subject which I have selected for discussion in the present letter is one of the highest moment, and yet, unfortunately, is one, respecting which the greatest and most lamentable mistakes have prevailed. Some have imagined that religious conversion, or regeneration, is effected by baptism, so that whoever is baptized is, of necessity, regenerated. This, however, is neither consistent with Scripture nor with fact, except in those very rare instances in which the "baptism with water," and that "with the Holy Spirit," occur at the same moment. Gibbon and Hume were baptized in their infancy, but lived and died infidels: Simon Magus was baptized, but certainly not regenerated: and you and I have known some who, though they were baptized when adults, on a profession of faith, afterwards relapsed into an open denial of the truth, and a daily neglect of the duties, of Christianity: from which it is evident, that baptism and regeneration are not necessarily connected. Others have considered repentance to be regeneration; but neither is this correct. *True* repentance often terminates in regeneration, and, indeed, is commonly connected with it; but it is not the thing itself. Others, again, regard reformation

and regeneration as synonymous; but this notion is as incorrect as either of the former. Regeneration may accompany baptism, repentance, or reformation; but it is *more* than either of them. Saul became "another man," without becoming a *new* man: Ahab "humbled himself," yet became not truly humble: many repent of some great iniquity, but relapse again into evil courses: and some reform their conduct, because the state of their health, or perhaps the monitions of conscience, lead them so to reform; though they still remain ignorant of "the one thing needful."

To guard you against these and other erroneous views of conversion, to which your attention may sometimes be called, I shall endeavour to describe it concisely as it is portrayed in Scripture, our only unerring guide with respect to this and every other Christian doctrine.

And here you cannot fail to remark, for it must be evident to every impartial reader of the word of God, that the mutation, which we are now to contemplate, can neither be slight, nor transient, nor, in general, slow. In the principal texts, where it is delineated, it seems either named or characterised in reference to one or other of two modes or circumstances of change, both of which are important and usually rapid, compared with the corresponding duration of existence: these are *conversion* and *regeneration*; the one indicating frequently a turning from one thing towards another, and in theology, accord-

ing to Dr. Johnson's definition, "a change from a state of reprobation to a state of grace;" and the other, a new creation, or a new birth; or, according to the same lexicographer, "birth by grace to a Christian life." The selection and classification of a very few texts will show that the two general terms I have just mentioned, are not artificially forced into the technology of theologians, but are those which most naturally convey the idea of the change they are chosen to describe.

The prophet Jeremiah had manifestly something more in view than a mere nominal passage from one religion to another, when he fancied Ephraim, after bemoaning himself, to pray—"Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." (*h*) And again, in his faithful exhortation to the Jews—"Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings." (*i*) More expressive still is the language of Joel—"Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful." (*k*) The language of our Lord to his disciples was, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath passed from death unto life." (*l*)

The apostles speak of this change as equally mo-

(*h*) Jer. xxxi. 18. See also Lam. v. 21.

(*i*) Jer. xxv. 5.

(*k*) Joel, ii. 13.

(*l*) Matt. xviii. 3. John, v. 24.

mentous: their divine Master taught them to preach to the Gentiles, that they might “*turn* them from “ darkness to light, and from the power of Satan “ unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of “ sins by faith.” How great must be the transformation from the darkness of ignorance and vice to the light of knowledge and holiness; how delightful the emancipation from the thralldom of the devil to be placed under the merciful government of God! They therefore acted under the persuasion that, “ if any “ one erred from the truth, and one *converted* him, “ that he, which converted the sinner from the error “ of his way, *saved a soul from death* :” and considered this conversion as “ a deliverance from the power of “ darkness, and a *translation into the kingdom of God’s “ dear Son.*” (m)

Among the numerous texts which evince this great change to be no less than an entire renovation of character, the following deserve notice. “ *Create in “ me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit “ within me.*” (n) “ I will put a *new spirit* within “ them; and I will take the stony heart out of their “ flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they “ may *walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, “ and do them.*” (o) “ Unless a man be born again, “ he *cannot* see the kingdom of God.” (p) “ *Born, not “ of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will*

(m) Acts, xxvi. 18. Jam. v. 19. Col. i. 13.

(n) Ps. li. 10.

(o) Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

(p) John, iii. 3.

“ of man, but of *God*.” (q) Though they are “ dead,” they shall “ hear the voice of the Son of God, and “ they that hear shall *live*.” (r) “ In Jesus Christ “ neither circumcision is any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creation*.” (s) “ Love one another with “ a pure heart fervently, having been *born again* not “ from corruptible seed, but from *incorruptible*, by “ that word of God which liveth and remaineth.” (t) “ Every one that doeth righteousness (habitually) is “ born of *Him*.” (v) “ Whosoever is born of God “ doth not commit sin” habitually, “and *loveth*, and “ *believeth that Jesus is the Christ*, and *overcometh the* “ *world*.” (w) “ Christ saved us, according to his “ mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and the “ *renovation of the Holy Spirit*.” (x) “ We are his “ workmanship, having been *created* through Christ “ Jesus to *good works*.” (y) Ye have been instructed to put off “ the *old man*, who was *corrupt* according to “ deceitful desires, and to be *renewed in the Spirit of* “ *your mind*; and to put on the *new man*, who is “ *created* according to God in righteousness and true “ holiness.” (z) “ Wherefore, if any man be in Christ, “ there is a *new creation*; the *old things* are *passed* “ *away*, behold all things are become *new*.” (a) “ That which is *born of the flesh is flesh*, and that “ which is *born of the Spirit is spirit*. Wonder not

(q) John, i. 13.

(r) John, v. 25.

(s) John, vi. 15.

(t) 1 Pet. i. 23.

(v) 1 John, ii. 29.

(w) 1 John, iii. 9, iv. 7, v. 1, 4.

(x) Tit. iii. 5.

(y) Eph. ii. 10.

(z) Eph. iv. 22—24.

(a) 2 Cor. v. 17.



“ that I said unto thee, Ye *must* be born again.  
“ The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest  
“ its sound, but knowest not whence it cometh, and  
“ whither it goeth: so is *every one that is born of the*  
“ *Spirit.*”(b)

From these passages it must appear, that the grand transformation we are now contemplating is not *ideal*: nor does it consist merely in enlightening and convincing the understanding, in a change of sentiments, or a change of outward conduct; though it often includes all these. A man may change his religious opinions, or his outward conduct, without experiencing a change of *heart*: and, on the other hand, a person may experience a genuine and complete change of heart (and the heart, it must never be forgotten, is the seat of true religion), without being able to trace the slightest difference in any one article of his creed. Every one knows, that in a certain sense the world is vanity, that he *must* die, that in the hour of death riches will not profit him, that time is precious, that the portion of it allowed us to prepare for eternity is uncertain and often short, that a death-bed repentance is not an infallible passport to heaven; and *many* know that they are sinners, that “ Christ Jesus “ came to *save* sinners,” that there is one, and *only one*, way of salvation. Yet though these are known and received as truths, they are not *felt* as such: they want the Promethean fire to give them life and ani-

(b) John, iii. 6—8.

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mation; or, to drop so profane an allusion on so solemn an occasion, they are but as the new formed body of Adam, before "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," and need a touch from Him, who alone can effectually (whether immediately, or by his own appointed instruments) reach the soul, to render them *living*, operative, efficacious sentiments.

In regeneration, so much of the light of heaven is let into the soul as enables us to know (or at least to *begin* to know) ourselves aright, to know God in his most awful and lovely manifestations, to see the enormity of sin, the "beauty of holiness," the worth of the Gospel, the "riches of divine grace." It is a light accompanied with warmth and vigour, that produces an internal and permanent change; a change that is universal, reaching to the heart, and evinced in the life: that renovates the powers of the spirit, dissipates folly, guilt, darkness, and sorrow, and introduces holiness, joy, and hope.

This change is rightly called *conversion*: not (as you have often known it represented) because it converts the subject of it from vivacity to lifelessness, from cheerfulness to gloom, from kindness and affability to churlishness and reserve; but because it converts him "from the error of his way," from the abuse to the proper use of the blessings with which he is surrounded, from a false to a true hope, from indifference to zeal, from "the power of Satan unto God." It is also as rightly denominated *regeneration*; for it brings the person who experiences it, not under the influence of the mechanical transports of animal

nature, or the blind impulses of a heated imagination, or into the delusive paths of enthusiasm; but into a *new state*, through the operation of the Spirit of God upon the spiritual part of man. Surely there can be nothing essentially chimerical, nothing contrary to reason, nothing that is not highly ornamental and infinitely beneficial to our natures, in having the powers of our mind thus changed by energy imparted from God, and having our pursuits directed after such objects as are most worthy the attention and regard of intelligent, accountable, immortal creatures! “ To  
“ have our apprehensions of Divine and spiritual  
“ things enlarged, and to have right conceptions of  
“ the most important matters; to have the stream of  
“ our affections turned from empty vanities to objects  
“ that are proper to excite and fix them;—to have  
“ our resolutions set against all sin, and a full pur-  
“ pose formed within us of an immediate reformation  
“ and return to God, with a dependence on his grace  
“ to help us both to will and to do;—to have our  
“ labours steadfastly applied to conquer sin, and to  
“ promote religion in ourselves and others;—to have  
“ our entertainments founded in a religious life, and  
“ flowing in upon us from the sweet intercourse we  
“ have with God in his word and ordinances, and  
“ the delightful conversation that we sometimes have  
“ with Christian friends:—and, finally, to have our  
“ hopes drawn off from earthly things, and fixed  
“ upon eternity?—Where is there any thing can be  
“ more honourable to us, than thus to be *renewed*  
“ *after the image of him that created us*, and to put

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“ on the new man, which after God is created in  
“ righteousness and true holiness? And where is any  
“ thing that can be more desirable than thus to have  
“ the darkness of our understandings cured, and the  
“ disorders rectified, that sin had brought upon our  
“ nature? Who is there that is so insensible of his  
“ depravity, as that he would not long for such a  
“ happy change? Or who is there that knows how  
“ excellent a work it is to be *transformed by the re-*  
“ *newing of the mind*, that would not with the greatest  
“ thankfulness adore the riches of Divine grace, if it  
“ appear that he is thus become a new creature, that  
“ *old things are passed away, and all things are be-*  
“ *come new?*” (c)

That such improvements of character often *have* occurred, and are often taking place now, cannot be denied by any philosophic observer of human nature: to disregard them, or to neglect an investigation of their cause, is to neglect one of the most interesting and remarkable classes of facts observable amongst mankind. Who has not either heard of, or witnessed the most extraordinary changes of conduct, produced through the *apparent* influence (to say the least) of religious motives? I say nothing here of the *three thousand* converted in one day at the feast of Pentecost,—of the conversion of St. Paul, and others mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,—because those are usually ascribed to the miraculous and *extraor-*

(c) Doddridge's Sermons on Regeneration.

*dinary* influences of the Holy Spirit in the apostolic times. But I may call your attention to matters of more recent occurrence. You have witnessed instances of men running eagerly the career of folly and dissipation, who have been suddenly arrested, and changed from “lovers of pleasure to lovers of God.” You have known others who have devoted themselves early to the military profession, who literally knew *no* fear, who have spent their lives in the pursuit of glory, who have approached the verge of life full of scars and full of honours, still panting after “glory, “honour, and immortality,” but thinking nothing of “eternal life;” till touched by an irresistible hand, they have been transformed from good soldiers to “good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” have buckled on “the “armour of God,” “fought the good fight of faith,” and, following “the Captain of their salvation,” have obtained “*the* victory,” and been rewarded with *unfading* laurels. Others again, you have known, who have been strong and *high-minded*, professing never to be subdued but by the force of argument, and dexterously evading an argument when it *was* forcible, if it were calculated to expose the sophistry of “free-“thinking” (as it is called), or to exhibit the reasonableness and advantages of being pious: you have seen them increase in the dexterity of unbelief, and in callousness to moral impression, year after year,

“ Gleaning the blunted shafts that have recoil’d,

“ Aiming them at the shield of truth again;”

and when a band of them has gone to church for the laudable purpose of quizzing, or of staring out of countenance, some preacher of rather more than usual energy and zeal,—have known one of this band pierced by “a dart from the archer,” convinced that religion is the “one thing needful,” and, though he came “to scoff, remaining to pray.”

Recollect too, the recorded conversion of Cecilius (so finely described in the Octavius of Minutius Felix) in the early ages of the church: and those of Lord Rochester, of Colonel Gardiner, of Mr. Newton, and Mr. Scott, in later times; and contemplate them as *matters of fact*. Recollect, again, the memorable advice given by the late Dr. Price to Lord Shelburne, the father of the present Marquis of Lansdowne. That nobleman inquired of the philosophic Doctor what would be the best means of reforming some profligate, idle, worthless fellows, who were employed on one of his estates; and was recommended to “introduce a zealous methodist preacher among them.” Here the reasoning was from a *fact*, and that no other than the preaching of Whitfield and Wesley among the Kingswood Colliers. “These were men who required not only to be *Christianized*, but *humanized*. “It was a mighty mass of deformity, without shape or order: and it was moulded into the human form; nay, more, it received the impress of the Divine image, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of these laborious ministers. The world will not easily forget the transformation: when

“ men, who scarcely had any thing about them human  
“ but their external transfiguration, changed their  
“ very nature; when the ferocious became softened,  
“ and the profane exemplary for the simplicity of  
“ holiness: and when the tears chased each other  
“ down their dark cheeks as they listened to the de-  
“ clarations of a Saviour’s love, while the *total* alter-  
“ ation of their life and manners bore no resemblance  
“ to ‘ the morning cloud and the early dew which  
“ passeth away.’ ” (d) Now, either this is real regene-  
ration, the genuine operation of the Spirit of God, or  
it is an effect without a cause, or at least without any  
cause even speciously assignable; we affirm, on the  
authority of Scripture, that it is the former,—and  
thus assign an adequate cause of this grand and  
durable effect: our opponents take the contrary alter-  
native, and yet have the modesty to accuse *us* of en-  
thusiasm. But if enthusiasm be a disease which is  
indicated by “ overlooking the relation which sub-  
“ sists between ends and means,—by counting upon  
“ casualties instead of contemplating the stated order  
“ of events,—and by hoping to realize the most  
“ momentous projects without any means at all, or by  
“ means totally inadequate to the effect,” it will not  
be difficult for any one to ascertain whether we or  
our adversaries are most deeply tainted by it.

Perhaps it may not be uninteresting for us to fix  
our attention upon the leading particulars of some re-

(d) Collyer’s Appeal to the Legislature.



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markable and well authenticated instance of conversion; and to this end allow me to select that of the Earl of Rochester, to which I adverted in my Letter on Prophecy. (e) In one respect it is doubtless defective, being void of evidence of the permanency of the change; and in that respect the examples of Colonel Gardiner, Mr. Newton, and Mr. Scott, have a decided advantage; but in these last-mentioned cases, the historians may by some be esteemed suspicious witnesses, on account of the theological sentiments they supported; I therefore have chosen the instance which was thought worthy the attention of Bishop Burnet, a writer whom no candid reader will accuse of any the least proneness to fanaticism.

Lord Rochester was distinguished through the active part of his life as a great wit, and a great profligate, an open and unwearied advocate of atheism. He had, however, especially during the last year of his life, strong convictions of the folly of his conduct; and once, after he had been arguing vehemently against the existence of a Supreme Being, he exclaimed, on retiring from the company, " Good God, that a man  
" who walks upright, who sees the wonderful works  
" of God, and has the use of his reason,—that csh  
" a one should bid defiance to his Creator!" But impressions like these soon wore off: so that it was not till his last illness, which continued about nine weeks, that he appears to have undergone the change

(e) See vol. i. p. 163.

which we denominate conversion. Then it was, according to his own account, that he first saw the enormity of sin, and learned the value of the atonement on which his hopes of pardon were founded. “ Shall “ the joys of heaven,” exclaimed he, “ be conferred “ on me? O mighty Saviour, never, but through “ thy infinite love and satisfaction! O never, but by “ the purchase of thy blood?”

The Scriptures, which had so often been the subject of his merriment, now secured his esteem, and impressed delight; for they had spoken to his *heart*: the seeming absurdities and contradictions vanished; and he thenceforward not only received the truth, but adhered to it. It appears to have been the 53d chapter of Isaiah, which was repeatedly read to him by Mr. Parsons, his chaplain, that was rendered useful to him. Comparing it with the history of our Saviour’s passion, he saw the fulfilment of a prophecy, written several ages before, and which the Jews, who blasphemed Jesus, still kept in their hand, as an inspired book. He confessed to Bishop Burnet, that, as he heard it read, “ he felt an *inward force* upon him, “ which did so enlighten his mind and convince him, “ that he could resist it no longer; for the words had an “ authority which did shoot like rays or beams in his “ mind, so that he was not only convinced by the reasonings he had about it, which satisfied his understanding, but by a *power* which did so effectually *constrain him*, that he did ever after as firmly believe in “ his Saviour, as if he had seen him in the clouds.”

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He had this chapter read so often to him, that he “got it by heart, and went through a great part of it,” says the Bishop, “in discourse with me, with a sort of heavenly pleasure, giving me his reflections on it: some of which I remember.”—*Who hath believed our report?* “Here,” he said, “was foretold the opposition the Gospel was to meet with from such wretches as he was.” *He hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.* On this he said, “the meanness of his appearance and person has made vain and foolish people disparage him, because he came not in such a fool’s-coat as they delighted in.” Many other observations he made which were not noted down; enlarging on many passages with a degree of heavenly pleasure, and applying various parts of it to his own humiliation and comfort. “O my God,” he would say, “can such a creature as I, who have denied thy being, and contemned thy power, be accepted by thee? Can there be mercy and pardon for me? Will God own such a wretch as I am?”

His faith now rested on Christ alone for salvation, and often would he entreat God to strengthen it; crying out, “Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief.” He gave numerous proofs of the depth of his repentance: amongst which his earnest desire to check and diminish the evil effects of his former writings, and too uniform example, deserve particular recollection. His abhorrence of sin was now as extraordinary as his former indulgence in it: he said

more than once, " he would not commit a *known* crime  
" to gain a kingdom."

" He told me (says the Bishop) he had overcome  
" all his resentments to all the world; so that he bore  
" ill-will to no person, nor hated any upon personal  
" accounts. He had given a true state of his debts,  
" and had ordered to pay them all, as far as his estate  
" that was not settled could go; and was confident that,  
" if all that was owing to him were paid to his exe-  
" cutors, his creditors would be all satisfied. He said  
" he found his mind now possessed with another sense  
" of things, than ever he had formerly. He did not  
" repine under all his pain, and in one of the sharp-  
" est fits he was under while I was with him, he said  
" he did *willingly* submit; and looking up to heaven,  
" said, ' *God's holy will be done, I bless him for all he*  
" *does to me.*' He said he was contented either to  
" die or live, as should please God: and though it  
" was a foolish thing for a man to pretend to choose  
" whether he would die or live, yet he rather wished  
" to *die*. He knew he could never be so well that  
" life should be comfortable to him. He was con-  
" fident he should be happy if he died, but he feared  
" if he lived he might relapse: and then said he to  
" me, ' In what a condition shall I be, if I *relapse*  
" after all this? But (he said) he trusted in the grace  
" and goodness of God, and was resolved to avoid all  
" those temptations, that course of life and company  
" that was likely to ensnare him: and he desired to  
" live on no other account, but that he might *by the*  
" *change of his manners in some way take off the high*

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“ *scandal his former behaviour had given.*’ All these  
 “ things at several times I had from him ; besides some  
 “ messages which very well became a dying penitent to  
 “ some of his former friends, and a charge to publish  
 “ any thing concerning him that might be a mean to  
 “ reclaim others. Praying God, that *as his life had*  
 “ *done much hurt, so his death might do some good.*

“ Having understood all these things from him,  
 “ and being pressed to give him my opinion plainly  
 “ about his eternal state, I told him, that though the  
 “ promises of the Gospel did all depend upon a *real*  
 “ *change of heart and life*, as the indispensable con-  
 “ dition upon which they were made, and that it was  
 “ scarce possible to know certainly whether our hearts  
 “ are changed, unless it appeared in our lives ; and  
 “ the repentance of most dying men being like the  
 “ howlings of condemned prisoners for pardon, which  
 “ flowed from no sense of their crimes, but from the  
 “ horror of approaching death ; there was little rea-  
 “ son to encourage any to hope from such sorrowing :  
 “ yet certainly if the mind of a sinner, even on a  
 “ death-bed, be *truly renewed and turned to God*, so  
 “ great is his mercy that he will receive him, even in  
 “ that extremity. He said, ‘ he was sure his mind  
 “ was entirely turned ; and though *horror* had given  
 “ him his first awakening, yet that was now grown  
 “ up into a *settled faith and conversion.*’ ” (f)

(f) See Bishop Burnet’s work entitled “ Some Passages in the  
 “ Life and Death of John Earl of Rochester,” a work which can-

This narration naturally suggests several reflections: but these I must leave to be the result of your own meditations; and proceed to answer a few questions which arise out of the subject now before us.

1. Is conversion absolutely necessary?

If this question is to be decided by the uniform tenour of Scripture, it *must* be answered in the affirmative. Some persons, I am aware, will tell you, that, however necessary this great change may be among heathens, it is not universally requisite in a Christian country. But this notion is founded upon a very inadequate view of the subject. By nature all are Gentiles. We are “by nature the children of “wrath, even as others.” (g) Whether men bow down to idols of wood and stone, or are immersed in the cares, or idolizing the amusements of this world, they may be equally distant from God, and equally need an entire change of *heart* to bring them to his spiritual presence, and restore them to his favour. “Those (says Bishop Tomline) who call themselves “Christians, but attend neither to the doctrines nor “to the duties of the Gospel, seem to differ but little, “with respect to the point now under consideration, “from those to whom the Gospel was first preached. “*The process in both must be nearly the same.*” (h) Both classes are descended from the corrupt stock of Adam,

not be recommended in more appropriate terms than those of Dr. Johnson, who said “the critic ought to read it for its elegance, the “pallasepher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety.”

(g) Eph. ii. 3.

(h) Refutation of Calvinism, p. 59.

both are influenced by improper motives, both are strangers to "Christ the hope of glory;" both are "in the bond of iniquity," whether they are conscious of it or not; and therefore, "*must be born again.*" The necessity for this change is doubtless as extensive as that great moral declension, from which it is the object of the Christian dispensation to restore mankind: so that since "*all have sinned,*" "though not after the similitude of Adam's transgression," *all* are "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," *all* must undergo a total change, or "*they cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (*i*) Indeed nothing in religion can be more evident than that "if we be bound on earth, we shall be bound in heaven;" "if we be absolved here, we shall be loosed there:" for, in this sense "where the tree falleth there it shall lie." (*k*) Hence the prophets which preceded our Lord, Jesus Christ himself, and the apostles who were commissioned to succeed him, all agreed in declaring that no unregenerate person shall enter the kingdom of God. The reason of this is obvious, both from the nature of God, and from that of man. "No unclean thing" can be admitted into the presence of God (who "cannot behold iniquity" but with abhorrence), nor into the regions of universal holiness and purity. And on the other hand, if an unregenerate soul *could* be admitted, heaven would furnish no delight. Such a spirit would

(*i*) Rom. v. 12, 14. Ps. li. 5. John, iii. 3.

(*k*) Eccles. xi. 3.



be incapable of relishing the happiness of a future world: for the knowledge there communicated, the enjoyments there experienced, are of a kind he never aspired after. The holiness of heaven, the sight and service of God, and of a glorified Redeemer, the society of angels and of saints made perfect, the “singing the song of Moses and the Lamb,” would all be tasteless and insipid, if not disgusting, to one who had been a stranger to the employments and gratifications of religion while on earth. To believe otherwise would be to believe that a man could be regenerate and unregenerate at the same time. “The happiness of heaven (said good old Richard Baxter) is *holiness*; and to talk of being happy without it is as palpable nonsense, as to talk of being well without health, or of being saved without salvation.”

2dly. Is the exact era of this great renovation of character always assignable?

Certainly not: though in many cases it is. In the momentous business of regeneration “there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” (*l*) Through the blessing of God upon early instruction, the seeds of grace have been sown in the hearts of many during infancy. God ordains “strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,” (*m*) and enables them to give evidence at six or seven years of age that their hearts are princi-

(*l*) 1 Cor. xii. 6.

(*m*) Ps. viii. 2.

pally fixed on "Christ and things divine." These, of course, cannot assign the period of their conversion. Others again, and perhaps the greater number of those who have had the benefit of a religious education, are led on by the suasive influence of Divine grace through such insensible gradations that they are unable to specify any remarkable circumstances attending their conversion, or to point out the particular time when it occurred. But others, and especially those who have passed their lives without any internal religion, or those who have allowed themselves in the course and habit of some particular sin, who must undergo in maturity a complete revolution of principle, or a total change of conduct, are commonly roused by some alarming or some afflictive dispensation of Providence, to "flee from the wrath to come," and eagerly inquire "what they must do to be saved?" (n) To such persons, says Dr. Paley, "Conversion is too momentous an event ever to be forgot. A man might as easily *forget his escape from a shipwreck.*" And though, says good Bishop Taylor, "after the manner of this life our recollection is imperfect, yet the greatest changes of our state of grace or sin are *always present*, like capital letters to an aged and dim eye." "It may not be necessary (says Paley again) for a man to *speak* of his conversion, but he will always *think* of it with unbounded thank-

(n) Acts, xvi. 30.

“fulness to the Giver of all grace, the Author of all  
“mercies, spiritual as well as temporal.” (o)

3dly. Is this important change ever sudden?

Most, if not all, of the instances of conversion recorded in the New Testament were sudden. This operation of God on the souls of men was then frequently instantaneous, and they were transformed from unbelievers to believers at once: “the Spirit fell on  
“them while they heard the word:” (p) and in consequence of this miraculous effusion, they who had just before professed Judaism or Polytheism, and neither knew nor loved Jesus Christ, at once confessed his name, and felt the power of his religion. But many moderns contend that sudden conversions, such as those to which we now advert, were confined to the apostolic times; as if the *common* operations of the Spirit were not sufficient to produce any rapid change. Yet I conceive it requires but slight reflection, to see that this their opinion comports neither with the declarations of Scripture, nor with the usual phenomena of intellect or rules of action. Does not “God work in us both to will and to do” now as well as in the primitive times? Cannot the eyes of our understanding be as effectually and as speedily  
“enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom” now as then?

(o) Paley’s Posthumous Sermons, pp. 123, 124. Taylor’s Holy Living, ch. i. § 3.

(p) Acts, x. 44.

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Was the promise of “ bestowing a new Spirit, and “ taking away the stony heart ” confined to the early ages ; or is “ God’s arm shortened,” or weakened, that he cannot reach and at once turn our spirits now, as he has done with others before us ? And, with regard to operations upon the mind, do men yield to them while the impressions are *strong*, or do they wait till they become weaker, and then give way ? When a man is thoroughly persuaded that the course in which he is persevering is imminently dangerous, does he not *immediately* quit it ? When he is convinced that the road in which he travels is conducting him *from* the place he wishes to reach, and is besides infested with robbers or beset with difficulties, does he not immediately come to a stand ? And if a path be pointed out which is both direct and safe, will he not with cheerfulness and alacrity pursue his journey in that newly discovered path, and press forward to regain the time lost in the wrong road ? Apply this reasoning to religion, and you will perceive that conversion not only *may* be, but, in many cases is *necessarily* sudden.

“ Some men (says Tillotson) by an extraordinary  
“ power of God’s grace upon their hearts, are *suddenly*  
“ *changed*, and strangely reclaimed from a very wicked  
“ and vicious, to a very religious and virtuous course of  
“ life ; and that which others attain by slower degrees,  
“ and great conflicts with themselves, before they  
“ can gain the upper hand of their lusts, these arrive  
“ *at all of a sudden* by a mighty revolution wrought

“ in them by the power of God’s grace, and, as it  
 “ were, by a new bias and inclination put upon their  
 “ souls.” (q)

The inclination to deny this seems to have arisen from the confounding of two very distinct things, regeneration and sanctification. The former of these is the commencement of spiritual *life*, the other is spiritual or religious *growth*: the former is “ a passing from death unto life,” the latter a “ changing from glory to glory;” and both “ by the Spirit of the living God.” If this distinction were duly attended to, I think the question would be set at rest.

4thly. May a person always know when he is in a converted state?

Probably not: but he may always with perfect ease ascertain the contrary. If he cherish worldly mindedness or an unholy disposition, if he allow himself in the practice of any known sin, if he habitually neglect public worship or private communion with God, if allusions to conversion by others either excite his ridicule or provoke his wrath, he need no more waste time to inquire whether his religious state be safe, than to ask whether heavy bodies fall downwards when left to themselves, whether opium is soporific, or ardent spirits productive of intoxication. On the other hand, if, as Paley remarks, “ he *allow* himself in no sin whatever, but cost what it may, “ contends against and combats *all* sin:” if he sedu-

(q) Tillotson’s Works, vol. ii. p. 341, fol. ed.

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lously cultivate a holy disposition, and “grow in  
“grace, in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ,”  
and in the steady practice of all the relative duties,  
he may *hope* that his spiritual life is commenced.—  
Still, as we live in times of much religious delusion  
and infatuation, let him not be satisfied, let him  
cherish nothing like *assurance*, unless he uniformly  
feel tenderness of conscience, and a desire to increase  
his religious attainments. Let him then “*examine*  
“himself whether he be in the faith.” Let him  
seriously endeavour to ascertain, whether he has  
“eternal life wrought in his heart:” whether he finds  
any satisfaction of soul in drawing near to God through  
a Mediator; whether he has an increasing sincere love  
to God; whether he has a rooted aversion to all  
sin; whether he has in any measure “overcome  
“the world” as they who believe that Jesus is the  
Son of God and have put their trust in him; whether  
his desires to escape from the miseries of hell, how-  
ever strong, are weaker than his desires after holi-  
ness and heaven; whether he is zealous in God’s  
service, aims at his glory, delights in his presence,  
and in doing his “will on earth as it is done in  
“heaven;” whether he can forgive enemies, can  
*sincerely* return blessing for cursing; whether he is  
anxious not simply to stand but to “run in the way  
“of God’s commandments.” In religion there is no  
standing still: if we are actuated by true religious  
principles, they will continually impel us forward, and  
cause us, with Paul, to “press towards the mark

“ for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ  
 “ Jesus.” (r)

Be it remembered, then, that true repentance and conversion reduce all holy resolutions to actions, and either create religion, or transfer it from the head to the heart, there to reside *permanently* as an actuating principle. “ He that resolves to live well when a  
 “ danger is upon him, or a violent fear, or when the  
 “ appetites of lust are newly satisfied, or newly  
 “ served, yet, when the temptation comes again sins  
 “ again, and then is sorrowful, and resolves once  
 “ more against it, and yet falls when the temptation  
 “ returns, is a vain man, but no *true penitent*, nor in  
 “ the state of grace; and if he chance to die in one of  
 “ those good modes is very far from salvation: for, if  
 “ it be necessary that we *resolve* to live well, it is ne-  
 “ cessary we should *do* so. For resolution is an im-  
 “ perfect act, a term of relation, and signifies nothing  
 “ but in order to the actions. It is as a faculty is to  
 “ the act, as spring to the harvest, as eggs are to  
 “ birds, as a relative to its correspondent, nothing  
 “ without it. No man therefore can be in the state  
 “ of grace and actual favour by resolutions and holy  
 “ purposes; these are but the gate portal towards par-  
 “ don: a HOLY LIFE is the only perfection of repen-  
 “ tance, and the *firm ground upon which we can cast the*  
 “ *anchor of hope in the mercies of God through Jesus*  
 “ *Christ.*” (s)

(r) Phil. iii. 14.

(s) Bishop Taylor's Holy Living, ch. iii. § 9.



## LETTER XVII.

*On the Influences of the Spirit.*

AMONG the several momentous doctrines that are developed in the system of revelation, none seems to have experienced a reception less consistent with the natural order of things, than that of the influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind and conduct of man. This doctrine is so compatible with the dictates of unassisted reason, that several of the heathen philosophers firmly believed it, and unambiguously asserted it. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is doubted by some philosophers residing in Christian countries: and although it is plainly declared in various portions of Scripture, still the only persons, as far as I know, by whom it is positively and unhesitatingly denied and despised, are professing *Christians*. This singular anomaly in the progress of opinion is often ascribed to the gradual expansion of the mental faculties, occasioned by the constant accumulation of the store of scientific, literary, and Biblical knowledge;—especially since the era of the reformation, when a new impulse was given to every species of human inquiry. The reason thus assigned, however, though plausible, is not satisfactory. Old sciences have, it is true, been much improved and extended; and new sciences have often grown with rapidity out of the old stock: so that

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truths which in one age have stood almost at the summit of knowledge, have in the next sunk into the mere elements; or propositions which in one age have been received as irrefragable, have in a succeeding one been exploded as untenable and fallacious. But nothing of this kind can be traced with regard to religious truth. The incessant and successful labours of Biblical critics have purged away impurities in existing copies, especially of the New Testament; and, by a careful collation of different manuscripts, have expunged errors and removed difficulties: but they have not added *one* proposition to the repository of revealed knowledge, as it was left by the apostles; nor have they taken *one* proposition away. The Bible gave the same view of human nature to the Primitive Christians in the early ages, and to the Reformers in the sixteenth century, as it exhibits to us: it pointed out the same method of salvation, and promised like aids of “the same Spirit,” to pious persons in all times, and in all places. (t) This, indeed, is essential to

(t) “Whatever then (says Vincentius Lirinensis) was faithfully  
 “sown by the Fathers in the church which is ‘the husbandry of  
 “God,’ ought to be diligently observed and cultivated by the sons:  
 “this must flourish and fructify, this must increase and multiply,  
 “and be continually growing on (retaining its original proportions)  
 “to its proper perfection. Succeeding ages may set off, file, and  
 “polish, the ancient doctrines of this Divine Philosophy; but they  
 “must never change, never retrench, or mutilate any thing: the  
 “doctrines may admit of more evidence, clearness, and distinction,  
 “but they must be *inviolably preserved in their full, entire, primitive*  
 “*perfection.*” Commonitory, cap. 29.

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its perfection, and fits it for universality: while the unceasing modifications in human sciences, notwithstanding their gradual augmentation, at once prove their imperfection, and suggest the strong probability that such imperfection will never be completely removed in the present state of existence.

But, without pursuing farther this train of reflection, permit me now to lay before you the opinions of philosophic heathens relative to the subject of Divine influences. That *they* thought the Deity the Inspirer of pure thoughts and holy conduct, as well as the Author of animal life, will, I conceive, be sufficiently obvious from the few quotations I shall here select. XENOPHON represents *Cyrus* with his dying breath, “as humbly ascribing it to a *Divine influence* on his mind, that he had been taught to acknowledge the care of Providence, and to bear his prosperity with a becoming moderation.” (v) PLATO describes *Socrates* as declaring that “wheresoever virtue comes, it is apparently the fruit of a Divine dispensation.” (w) And PLATO, XENOPHON, ANTISTHENES, and PLUTARCH testify, that *Socrates* publicly declared before his judges, that he was accompanied by an invisible conductor, or attendant spirit, whose frequent interposition stopped him in the commission of evil. Plato also himself observes that “*virtue is not to be taught, but by Divine assistance.*” (x) And in his

(v) Xen. Cyropæd. lib. viii. cap. 7. § 1.

(w) Plat. Men. ad. fin. p. 428.

(x) Epinom. p. 1014.

sixth book, *De Republica*, he affirms that “ if any  
 “ man escape the temptations of life, and behave  
 “ himself as becomes a worthy member of society, he  
 “ has reason to own that *it is God who saves him.*”(y)  
 SIMPLICIUS has a prayer “ to God, as the Father  
 “ and Guide of reason, so to co-operate with us, as  
 “ to purge us from all carnal and brutish affections,  
 “ that we may be enabled to act according to the dic-  
 “ tates of reason, and to attain to the true knowledge  
 “ of himself.”(z) MAXIMUS TYRIUS argues that  
 “ if skill in the professions and sciences is insinuated  
 “ into men’s minds by a Divine influence, we can  
 “ much less imagine that a thing so much more excel-  
 “ lent as virtue is, can be the work of any mortal  
 “ art: for the notion must be very strange to think  
 “ that God is liberal and free in matters of less mo-  
 “ ment, and sparing in the greatest.” And in the  
 same discourse he remarks that “ even the best dis-  
 “ posed minds, as they are seated in the midst  
 “ between the highest virtue and extreme wickedness,  
 “ need the assistance of God to incline and lead them  
 “ to the better side.”(a) TULLY, in a passage quoted  
 in the third letter of this series, declares that “ No  
 “ man was ever truly great without some *divine in-*  
 “ *fluence.*”(b) And SENECA, when he is speaking of  
 a resemblance to the Deity in character, ascribes it to  
 his influence upon the mind: “ Are you surprised

(y) *De Repub.* lib. vi. p. 677. Ed. Francof. 1602.

(z) *Simplic.* in *Epictet.* ad fin.

(a) *Max. Tyr. Dissert.* xxii.

(b) See vol. i. p. 54.

“ (says he) that man should approach to the Gods?  
 “ It is God that comes to men; nay, which is yet  
 “ more, *he enters into them*: for no mind becomes  
 “ virtuous, but *by his assistance*.” (c)

Numerous passages might easily be extracted from the Christian apologists and other writers in the first four centuries, to elucidate and confirm the same great

(c) Senec. Epistol. lxxiii.—Among modern nations destitute of the light of Christianity, the doctrine that wisdom of various kinds is imparted by spiritual teaching, is frequently avowed. Thus one of the answers of a Chicasaw to Wesley indicates clearly that the tradition of Divine influence had reached that people:—“ There are but a few (says he) whom the Beloved one chooses from a child, and is in them, and takes care of them, and teaches them. *They know* these things [religious matters], and our old men practise, therefore *they know*; but I do not practise, therefore I know but little.”

So again, the following translation of a letter “ sent with a pre- sent from the Chiefs of the five Indian Nations to Dr. Jenner,” furnishes pleasing evidence to the same effect.

“ Our Father has delivered unto us the book you sent us how to  
 “ use the discovery which the Great Spirit made to you, whereby  
 “ the small-pox, that fatal enemy of our tribes, may be driven from  
 “ the earth. We have deposited your book in the hands of the  
 “ man of skill, whom our Great Father employs to attend us when  
 “ sick or wounded.

“ We shall not fail to teach our children to speak the name of  
 “ Jenner, and to thank the Great Spirit for bestowing upon him so  
 “ much wisdom and so much benevolence.

“ We send with this a belt and string of Wampum, in token of  
 “ our acceptance of your precious gift; and we beseech the Great  
 “ Spirit to take care of you in this world and in the land of spirits.

“ Signed by the Chiefs of the Mohawk, Onandaga, Senega,  
 “ Oneida, and Cayuga nations.”

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truth. (d) But, as I wish to reduce this branch of our inquiry into as narrow compass as possible, you will prefer my laying before you the sentiments of the venerable English Reformers, as they are represented in the Homilies: that their notions on this point were sufficiently clear and decisive will appear from a quotation or two. “ The charity wherewith we love our brethren (say they) is verily God’s work in us. If after our fall we repent, it is by him that we repent, which reached forth his merciful hand to raise us up. If we have any will to rise, it is he that preventeth our will, and disposeth us thereto. If after contrition we feel our consciences at peace with God through remission of our sin, and so be reconciled again to his favour, and hope to be his children and inheritors of everlasting life; who worketh these great miracles in us? Our worthiness, our deservings, our wits, our virtue? Nay, verily, St. Paul will not suffer flesh and clay to presume to such arrogance, and therefore saith, *All is of God.*” “ Without his lively and secret inspiration can we not once so much as speak the name of our Mediator, as St. Paul plainly testifieth: *no man can once name our Lord Jesus Christ, but in the Holy Ghost.* Much less should we be able to believe and know those

(d) For a brief but judicious summary of the sentiments of those individuals in every age from the Fathers down to the Reformation, who were either famous for piety, or instruments of the several minuter changes which led to the Reformation itself, see the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, vol. v. pp. 325—328.

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“ great mysteries that be opened to us by Christ.”  
“ Very liberal and gentle is the Spirit of Wisdom.  
“ In his power shall we have sufficient ability to know  
“ our duty to God, in him shall we be comforted and  
“ encouraged to walk in our duty, in him shall we be  
“ meet vessels to receive the grace of Almighty God :  
“ for it is he that purgeth and purifieth the mind by  
“ his secret working. He lighteneth the heart to  
“ conceive worthy thoughts of Almighty God, he  
“ sitteth in the tongue of man to stir him to speak  
“ his honour: no language is hid from him, for he  
“ hath the knowledge of all speech, he only minis-  
“ tereth spiritual strength to the powers of our soul  
“ and body. To hold the way which God hath pre-  
“ pared for us to walk rightly in our journey, we  
“ must acknowledge that it is the power of his  
“ Spirit which helpeth our infirmity. That we may  
“ boldly come in prayer, and call upon Almighty  
“ God as our Father, it is by this Holy Spirit which  
“ maketh intercession for us with continual sighs.  
“ If any gift we have wherewith we may work to the  
“ glory of God, and profit of our neighbour, all is  
“ wrought by his own and self-same Spirit, which  
“ maketh his distributions peculiarly to every man  
“ as he will.” (e)

Consistently with this is the language of a very

(e) Homily for Rogation Week, 3d part, pp. 412—414. Oxford ed. 1810.



great majority of religious writers from the Reformation down to the present time. Even the present Bishop of Lincoln, though his language on several religious topics indicates a strange aversion to the notions current amongst the majority of pious men, yields his testimony in favour of the doctrine now in contemplation. In explaining the words of the Liturgy, ‘ O God, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing, without thou grant us the help of thy grace,’ &c. his Lordship says, “ I have only to observe that the ‘ ‘ good thing ’ here mentioned must mean *good in the sight of God*: such an action our weak and *unassisted* nature will unquestionably not allow us to perform.” To the same purpose he observes in another place, “ The human mind is so weakened and vitiated by the sin of our first parents, that we cannot by our own natural strength prepare it, or put it into a proper state for the reception of a saving faith, or for the performance of the *spiritual* worship required in the Gospel: this mental purification *cannot be effected without divine assistance*.” Once more: “ The grace of God prevents us Christians, that is, it goes before, it gives *the first spring* and rise to our endeavours, that we may have a good will: and when this good will is thus excited, the grace of God does not desert us, but it *works with us when we have that good will*.” And again: “ It is acknowledged that man has not the disposi-

\* tion, and consequently not the *ability*, to do what  
 “ in the sight of God is good, *till he is influenced by*  
 “ *the Spirit of God.*” (f)

Christians then ascribe, or ought to ascribe, every intellectual, moral, and spiritual attainment to God. And when we speak of the *ordinary* influences of the Spirit of God, we mean to impute to the operation of that Spirit our sanctification,—all the actions of our Christian course, our constancy and perseverance,—all particular graces and virtues which we seek at his hands,—our adoption,—our access to God and assistance in prayer,—our “joy and peace in believing,”—our support in trials and afflictions, and deliverance from temptations,—our continual progress in holiness: and we affirm that these gifts are not offered to here and there a favoured individual, but to all sincere Christians in every age of the church; for, when speaking of the promise of the Spirit, the declaration of PETER was as universal as language could make it—“the promise is *to you and to your*  
 “ *children; and to all that are afar off* (either in point  
 “ of space or of time,) to as many as the Lord our  
 “ God shall call.” (g) That this opinion is compatible with the uniform tenour of Scripture will be made evident by a few quotations set down promiscuously, as they occur to my mind.

“ No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith  
 “ ‘ Jesus is accursed;’ and no man can say ‘ Jesus

(f) Tomline’s Refutation of Calvinism, pp. 54, 60, 61, 67, 68.

(g) Acts, ii. 39.

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“ is the Lord’ but by the Holy Spirit. There are  
 “ differences of gifts, but it is the same Spirit.” (h)  
 “ We have not received the spirit of the world, but  
 “ that which is from God, that we may know the  
 “ things which have been freely given to us of God.” (i)  
 “ Such *were* some of you : but ye have been washed,  
 “ ye have been sanctified, ye have been justified, by  
 “ the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of  
 “ our God.” (k) “ Ye are not in the flesh, but in  
 “ the Spirit; since *the Spirit of God dwelleth* in  
 “ you. But *if any man have not the Spirit of God*  
 “ *he is none of his.*” “ If through the Spirit ye  
 “ mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For,  
 “ as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are  
 “ the sons of God.” “ The Spirit also helpeth our  
 “ weaknesses; for we know not what we should pray  
 “ for as we ought; but the Spirit itself intercedeth  
 “ for us in groans which cannot be expressed:” (l)  
 or, as Doddridge renders the latter clause, “ the  
 “ Spirit itself manages affairs for us with unutterable  
 “ groanings.” “ The God of hope fill you with all  
 “ joy and peace, in believing; that ye may abound  
 “ in hope *through the power of the Holy Spirit.*”  
 “ That the Gentiles might be made an acceptable  
 “ offering, being *sanctified by the Spirit.*” (m) “ He  
 “ who hath *begun* a good work in you, will *finish* it  
 “ until the day of Jesus Christ.” (n) “ They that

(h) 1 Cor. xii. 3, 4. See also ver. 6. (i) 1 Cor. ii. 12.

(k) 1 Cor. vi. 11. (l) Rom. viii. 9, 14, 26. Dodd, in loc.

(m) Rom. xv. 13, 16.

(n) Phil. i. 6.

“ wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” (o)  
 “ My gracious assistance is sufficient for thee: for  
 “ my power is made perfect in weakness.” (p) “ He  
 “ saved us, not by works of justification which we  
 “ did, but according to his mercy, by the washing  
 “ of regeneration, even *the renovation of the Holy*  
 “ *Spirit*, which he shed on us richly, through Jesus  
 “ Christ our Saviour.” (q) “ That good doctrine,  
 “ which is committed to thy trust, keep, through the  
 “ Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.” (r) “ Where  
 “ the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (s)  
 “ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by  
 “ the Holy Spirit which hath been given us.” (t)  
 “ That ye may be *strengthened with might by his*  
 “ *Spirit in the inner man*, that Christ may dwell in  
 “ your hearts by faith; that being rooted and  
 “ grounded in love, ye may know the surpassing love  
 “ of the knowledge of Christ.” “ For the fruit of  
 “ the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gen-  
 “ tleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, tempe-  
 “ rance.” (v) “ Unless a man be born of water, and  
 “ *of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of  
 “ God.” “ He that abideth in me and I in him, he  
 “ beareth much fruit: but, severed from me, ye can  
 “ do *nothing*.” “ Nevertheless, it is expedient for  
 “ you that I go away: for, if I go not away, the  
 “ Advocate (Comforter, Monitor, or Instructor,

(o) Is. xl. 31.

(p) 2 Cor. xii. 9.

(q) Tit. iii. 5.

(r) 2 Tim. i. 14.

(s) 2 Cor. iii. 17.

(t) Rom. v. 5.

(v) Eph. iii. 16, 18, 19. Gal. v. 22.

“ Παρακλητος,) will not come unto you; but if I go I  
 “ will send him unto you. And when he is come he  
 “ will convince the world of sin, of righteousness,  
 “ and of judgment. When *he* cometh, *even the*  
 “ *Spirit of truth*, he will guide you into all the  
 “ truth.” (w) “ We are witnesses of these things,  
 “ and so is the Holy Spirit also, which God hath  
 “ given to those that obey him.” (x) “ Ye have re-  
 “ ceived the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba,  
 “ Father. The Spirit itself bearing witness with our  
 “ spirit, that we are the children of God.” (y) “ In  
 “ whom ye, having believed, have been sealed with  
 “ the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest  
 “ of our inheritance, unto the redemption of the  
 “ purchased possession.” “ Through him we both  
 “ have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (z)  
 “ I can do *all things through him who strengtheneth*  
 “ *me.*” (a) Know ye not that ye are the temple of  
 “ God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?  
 “ If any man corrupt the temple of God, God will  
 “ corrupt him; for the temple of God is holy, which  
 “ temple ye are.” “ Know ye not that your body is  
 “ the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you,  
 “ which ye have from God?” (b) Therefore, “ offend  
 “ (or grieve) not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby  
 “ ye have been sealed to the day of redemption.”

(w) John, iii. 5. xv. 5. xvi. 7, 8, 13.

(x) Acts, v. 32.

(y) Rom. viii. 15, 16.

(z) Eph. i. 13, 14. ii. 18.

(a) Phil. iv. 13.

(b) 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19.

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But, “ Work out your own salvation with fear and  
“ trembling: for it is *God that worketh in you*, both  
“ to will and to do, (i. e. influences your desires and  
“ endeavours,) of his benevolence.” (c)

Such is the language of Scripture; from which it is manifest that it is not a mark of ignorant enthusiasm, but of pious reliance upon the Divine promise, to *expect* the assistances of the Spirit of God, when they are humbly sought in the way of his appointment. The mode in which these influences are communicated, may be indefinitely diversified, but the effect will uniformly be the improvement of the religious character, a more complete emancipation from the domination of the passions, from the slavery of sin; or, to express the continued effect in Scripture phraseology, it will be “ *growth in grace*.” In accomplishing this, the whole circle of means and instruments, animate and inanimate, by which we are circumscribed, is within the reach of God, and at his command. Sometimes he has recourse to alarming dispensations of his Providence, which awaken a sense of the fluctuating nature of all terrestrial sources of enjoyment, teach us our dependance upon Him, and lead us to repose our entire confidence on Him alone. At other times he employs the conversations, the arguments, perhaps the faithful remonstrances, of Christian friends, to stimulate us in the path of duty, and point us to “ the fountain of living waters.”

(c) Eph. iv. 30. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

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At others, and this most frequently, he makes use of "the word of truth" either read or preached: this he has assured us he will "render lively and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and to be a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart;" (d) and thus, by putting life into it, cause it by an irresistible energy to communicate spiritual life to our souls. Sometimes he operates upon us by the recollection of past occurrences, and "while we are thus musing, the fire of divine love burns" within us. (e) On such occasions He can awaken a dormant idea which lay neglected in the memory, can secretly attract the attention of the mind to it, can enable, nay compel, us to trace its various relations, can throw a lustre upon things which were obscure, place those which seemed remote immediately before our mental eye, suspend the operation of secular objects, dispel the clouds of prejudice, impart an unusual power to what was before considered as trifling or unworthy *present* regard, convince us fully and *practically* of the vanity of all enjoyments except those which are consecrated by religion, and thus effectually lead us to "fix our affections on things above." In these and numerous other ways, there may be a real operation of the Spirit of God upon men's minds, though they may be utterly unconscious of it. His energy is not the less real, because it is

(d) Heb. iv. 12.

(e) Ps. xxxix. 3.



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silent, secret, and unperceived : for here, as well as in the management of the natural world,

“ Alone He works in all, yet He alope

“ Seems not to work.”

THOMSON.

To ridicule, disbelieve, and deny all this, has of late been reckoned an indication of a powerful and philosophic mind : yet it requires but a cursory examination to perceive that such is a spurious criterion of true elevation either of sentiment or character ; and to affirm, on the contrary, that, with only our present knowledge of human intellect and of Divine power, the denial of spiritual influences is as unphilosophical as it is impious.

No person can look into the world with the eyes of a philosopher, and not soon ascertain that the grand theatre of phenomena which lies before him is naturally subdivided into two great classes of scenery, the one exhibiting constrained, the other voluntary, motion ; the former characteristic of matter, the latter as clearly indicating something perfectly distinct from matter, and possessing totally different qualities. “ Pulverise matter (says Saurin), give it “ all the different forms of which it is susceptible, “ elevate it to its highest degree of attainment, make “ it vast and immense, moderate or small, luminous “ or obscure, opaque or transparent, there will never “ result any thing but *figures* ; and never will you be “ able by all these combinations or divisions to produce one single sentiment, one single thought.”

The reason is obvious: a substance compounded of innumerable parts, which every one acknowledges matter to be, cannot be the subject of an individual consciousness, the seat of which *must* be a simple and undivided substance; as the great Dr. Clarke has long ago irrefragably shown. Intellect and volition are of a quite different nature from corporeal figure or motion, and must reside in, or emanate from, a different kind of being, a kind which, to distinguish it from matter, is called spirit or mind. Of these, the one is necessarily inert, the other essentially active. The one is characterised by want of animation, life, and even motion, except as it is urged by something *ab extra*: the other is living, energetic, self-moving, and possessed of power to move other things. We often fancy, it is true, that matter moves matter; but this, strictly speaking, is not correct. When one wheel or lever in a system of machinery communicates motion to another, it can at most only communicate what it has received, and if you trace the connexion of the mechanism, you will at length arrive at a first mover, which first mover is, in fact, *spiritual*. If, for example, it be an animal, it is evidently the spiritual part of that animal from whence the motion originally springs. If, otherwise, it be the descent of a weight, or the fall of water, or the force of a current of air, or the expansive force of steam, the action must ultimately be referred to what are termed powers of nature, that is, to gravitation or elasticity; and these, it is now well known, cannot be explained by any

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allusion to material principles, but to the indésinent operation of the Great Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our being,—the Finger of God touching and urging the various subordinate springs, which in their turn move the several parts of the universe. Thus God acts in all places, in all times, and upon all persons. The whole material world, were it not for his Spirit, would be inanimate and inactive: (f) all motion is derived either from his energy, or from that of spirits which he animates; and it is next to *certain* that the only primary action is that of spirit, and the most direct and immediate, that of spirit upon spirit.

All consistent Theists allow that God is every where present by his essence, and, as Bishop Taylor has most exquisitely expressed it, “ God is every where  
“ present by his *power*. He rolls the orbs of heaven  
“ with his hand, he fixes the earth in its place with  
“ his foot, he guides all the creatures with his eye,  
“ and refreshes them with his influence: he makes  
“ the powers of hell to shake with his terrors, and  
“ binds the devils with his word, and throws them  
“ out with his command, and sends the angels on

(f) See *Baxter on the Soul*, § 2, in which that acute metaphysician proves the necessity of an immaterial mover in all spontaneous motions; and Professor *Vince's Essay on the Cause of Gravitation*, in which he assigns many cogent reasons for believing that the Deity  
“ in his government does not act by material instruments, but that  
“ the whole is conducted by *his* more immediate agency, without  
“ the intervention of material causes.”

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“ embassies with his decrees ; he hardens the joints  
 “ of infants, and confirms the bones when they are  
 “ secretly fashioned. He it is that assists at the nu-  
 “ merous productions of fishes ; and there is not one  
 “ hollowness at the bottom of the sea, but he shows  
 “ himself to be Lord of it, by sustaining there the  
 “ creatures that came to dwell in it : and in the wil-  
 “ derness the bittern and the stork, the dragon and  
 “ the satyr, the unicorn and the elk, live upon his  
 “ provisions, and revere his power, and feel the force  
 “ of his Almightyness.”

If, then, the *moral* well-being of the universe be of  
 greater importance than its mere existence ; and that  
 it is so is evident from the fact, that the continuance  
 of the earth is solely rendered subservient to “ the  
 “ gathering in of the saints,” after which “ the heavens  
 “ will pass away with a great noise, and the elements  
 “ will be greatly heated and dissolved ;” (g) if it be  
 irreconcilable with the idea of a wise governor to  
 imagine that he will incessantly attend to minor mat-  
 ters, and as habitually disregard concerns of greater  
 moment, then may we adopt the succeeding language  
 of the same admirable writer, and say, that “ God is  
 “ especially present in the hearts of his people by  
 “ his Holy Spirit : and indeed the hearts of holy men  
 “ are temples in the truth of things, and in type and  
 “ shadow they are heaven itself. For God reigns  
 “ in the *hearts* of his servants : there is his kingdom.  
 “ The energy of grace hath subdued all his enemies :

(g) Is. lxxv. 8. Matt. v. 13. xxiv. 22, 31. 2 Pet. iii. 10.

“ there is his power. They serve him night and  
“ day, and give him thanks and praise : that is his  
“ glory. This is the religion and worship of God in  
“ the temple. The temple itself is the heart of man ;  
“ Christ is the High Priest, who from thence sends  
“ up the incense of prayers, and joins them to his  
“ own intercession, and presents all together to his  
“ Father ; and the Holy Ghost, by his dwelling there,  
“ hath also consecrated it into a temple ; and God  
“ dwells in our hearts by faith, and Christ by his  
“ Spirit, and the Spirit by his purities : so that we  
“ are also cabinets of the mysterious Trinity : and  
“ what is this short of heaven itself, but as infancy is  
“ short of manhood, and letters of words ? ” (h)

Many, I am aware, ascribe all notions of communion with God, and the operations of the Spirit, to  
“ some strange ferment of the *animal* spirits.” But  
this is to give mere words in current payment, and  
leave the phenomenon unexplained. For, if you inquire, what are the animal spirits ? how do they ferment ? how does this temporary fermentation produce a permanent change of character, enduring through life, with no other modification than the constant approximations to still greater perfection ? you immediately reduce the assertors to silence, and leave them to enjoy the consolation of seeing their much vaunted proposition shrinking into its pristine vacuity and inanity. And where indeed is the necessity of re-

(h) Bishop Taylor's Holy Living, ch. 1, § 3.

curring to any other theory to explain this momentous class of facts, than that which the Scriptures present? Why should the Deity, whose moral excellencies if possible outshine his majesty and his power, be excluded from interference in the moral department of his creation? Where is the philosophy of imagining (when it is acknowledged that God created us, sustains us by his power, cherishes us by his providential care, and sheds upon us temporal blessings), that he will never pour his influences into the soul, the only avenue, through which Religion can enter, or from which it can proceed? We are taught by the great Author of Christian knowledge that, "God is a Spirit, and "they that worship him must worship him in spirit "and in truth." He therefore "searches the heart;" and the only religion he approves is a spiritual religion, manifested, it is true, by external deportment, by uprightness of conduct, and purity of life, but still having its seat in the soul: and yet we are to be told that he has it not in his power, or it comports not with his purposes, to reach the spiritual part of man. The writers of the New Testament exhort us to fervency and frequency in prayer; but our modern promulgators of Christianity improved (for such they esteem it by their innovations), remove the very basis of prayer: for what is prayer but aspiration of soul, "spiritual breathing?" what can a religious creature, as such, pray for, but to be rendered better? and how can he possibly be rendered better but by experiencing Divine energy, by having strength and

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goodness imparted to him from the Fountain of strength and excellence, that is, by being made a recipient of the influences of the Spirit?

Farther, I believe it will be found that the deniers of this consolatory and cheering doctrine, by so doing, exclude the greater while they admit the less: and that, whether they believe in spiritual existences, or are completely materialists in theory. Whether the mind be purely spiritual (that is, in this sense, immaterial), or some ethereal conformation of refined matter, it is an incontrovertible fact that mind can act upon mind, either mediately or immediately. For example: A correspondent at a distance communicates his sentiments to me by written symbols: on the perusal of these my mind is as completely and more powerfully operated upon, than the wheels of a watch by its main spring, or of a clock by its pendulum and descending weight: joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure, malevolent or benevolent sympathies, shall thence be excited: and this is the entire operation of human intellect upon human intellect, through the medium of the various instruments we have in our power. Similar effects result from the perusal of poetry, or from witnessing dramatic representations. I repeat that they are the genuine influence of mind upon mind: and you will at once perceive the truth of the assertion, if you simply recollect that by excluding the thinking, inventive, sentient, percipient part (whatever it be) from writers, readers, performers, and spectators, you in conse-



quence annihilate the whole of this interesting class of phenomena. This then being the case, there remains no other alternative than either to admit that the mind of God can act upon the mind of man, or to concede to the human intellect greater power than belongs to the Most Powerful; a conclusion from which it must be a singularly strong mind indeed that does not recoil with horror and dismay.

Having thus shown that the doctrine of Divine influences is revealed in Scripture, and is consistent with the purest philosophy, it remains that I fortify it against one or two prevailing abuses. And first, it is by some affirmed that the gift of the Spirit is arbitrary, that is, *entirely* independent of human conduct or human qualifications: but, that this is invariably the case, is not, I apprehend, a fair inference from the New Testament, contemplated in the aggregate, however it may have been deduced from some insulated passages. There is, I conceive (though on this delicate subject I would speak with diffidence, and with the deepest conviction of the omnipotent energy with which the Spirit often prepares its own way) an established connexion between the condition of those who are, or will be, believers, and the communication of spiritual life and growth; and that connexion may be doubtless founded upon sufficient reasons in the nature of things, though they may not have the least dependance upon antecedent merit, and are, and must be unknown to us in our present state. God sees us as we are, and imparts to us according to our necessities, and

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his own wise and beneficent (not capricious) intentions, efficacious grace being given to some, while sufficient grace is offered to all. Divine assistance thus bestowed does not take away our liberty, but frees us from “bondage,” and, as David expresses it, “enlargeth our hearts to run the way of God’s commandments.” And though it is conferred gratuitously, and not because we *deserved* it, yet we must not assert that it is usually in its origin imparted arbitrarily; for it is communicated in answer to prayer, and we are exhorted to *pray for it*. “If ye (says our Lord), being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to *them that ask him?*” And conformably with this the first great effusion of the Spirit was given in answer to prayer, when the disciples were for that purpose “with one accord in one place;” and, on another occasion “when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake the word of God with freedom.” (*i*)

Nor, again, is the operation of the Spirit arbitrary in *degree*. Its rule and measure is, “Whosoever hath much, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but whosoever hath little, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” (*k*) Hence result the exhortations of the apostle to the Gentiles, which

(*i*) Luke, xi. 13. Acts, ii. 1. iv. 31. See also James, i. 5.

(*k*) Matt. xiii. 12. Luke, viii. 18.

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would otherwise be remarkable enough: “*Be strong*” “*in the grace which is by Christ Jesus.*” “*Strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power of his might.*” “*Be filled with the Spirit,* speaking to one another “*in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs.*” (*l*)

Nor, on the other hand, is the withholding or the withdrawing spiritual influences merely an arbitrary act. It is the just punishment of men’s wickedness, perverseness, and folly, in trifling with the means of grace, “*doing despite unto the Spirit,*” and thus “*grieving that Spirit,*” till it was compelled to withdraw. (*m*) Hence, by the way, results the necessity of a constant self-denial: because, it is evident that so far as we indulge any vanity of mind, or corruption of heart, so far we resist the graces of the Spirit, and render ourselves indisposed to relish and improve its inspiration: we should, therefore, sedulously avoid all those tempers, and employments, all those enjoyments and indulgences which may cause us to be “*less able, and less disposed to improve those degrees of Divine grace that are communicated to us.*”

Lastly, I may remark, that the doctrine under consideration is most dreadfully abused by every one who says, ‘I can do nothing without Divine assistance, therefore I will sit still and use no efforts for my recovery till God irresistibly impel me to it.’ Here, as in numerous other instances, the state of torpid

(*l*) 2 Tim. ii. 1. Eph. vi. 10. v. 18, 19.

(*m*) Heb. x. 29. Eph. iv. 30.

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inactivity persevered in is completely different from that which is recommended and adopted in all analogous circumstances where religion is not concerned. For, although, as it is forcibly expressed in the Liturgy, "we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves," yet it does not follow that we can do *nothing*: we can put ourselves in the way to obtain the aid offered to us. The dependance of the creature on God is not confined to religious matters, but runs through all our concerns. We can no more stretch out our hands or walk, than we can raise our hearts to God, without his aid; yet stretching out the hands, or walking, is perfectly voluntary. Our gardens and our fields will be totally unproductive, unless God further our endeavours by his agency and his blessing: yet who but a madman or an idiot would think this a sufficient excuse for neglecting the culture of his garden, or the business of ploughing and sowing in his fields? Spiritual influences neither destroy our moral liberty, nor remove our moral responsibility; but bring with them a corresponding class of duties. We are not to be careless in our conduct, because we are assured of the suggestions, reproofs, and expostulations of our faithful friends; nor are we to be supine in our religious concerns because we know not how soon or how long it may be before the suggestions and monitions of the Holy Spirit are prevailingly influential. The apostle Paul does not refer to the promised aids of the Spirit as an argument for sloth, but for exertion; his language (already quoted in this letter) is

—“ Work out *your own* salvation with fear and  
“ trembling; *for* it is God that influences your desires  
“ and endeavours of his benevolence.”

As this topic, and especially exhortation to obey the solicitations of the Spirit, fall peculiarly within the province of ministers of the Gospel, allow me to terminate this letter by a quotation from an excellent modern author, whose eloquence and piety on this as on all occasions mutually adorn and exalt each other.

“ Though a general attention to the duties of piety  
“ and virtue, and a careful avoidance of the sins  
“ opposed to these, are certainly included in a be-  
“ coming deportment to the Holy Spirit, perhaps  
“ it is not *all* that is included. The children of God  
“ are characterised in Scripture by their being ‘ led  
“ ‘ by the Spirit:’ *led*, evidently not impelled, not  
“ driven forward in a headlong course, without choice  
“ or design; but, being, by the constitution of their  
“ nature, rational and intelligent, and by the in-  
“ fluence of grace, rendered spiritual, they are dis-  
“ posed to obey at a touch, and to comply with the  
“ gentle insinuations of Divine grace; they are ready  
“ to take that precise impression which corresponds  
“ with the mind and purpose of the Spirit. You  
“ are aware of what consequence it is in worldly  
“ concerns to embrace opportunities, and to improve  
“ critical seasons; and thus, in the things of the  
“ Spirit, there are times peculiarly favourable, mo-  
“ ments of happy visitation, where much more may  
“ be done towards the advancement of our spiritual

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“ interest than usual. There are gales of the Spirit,  
“ unexpected influences of light and of power, which  
“ no assiduity in the means of grace can command,  
“ but which it is a great mark of wisdom to improve.  
“ If the husbandman is attentive to the vicissitudes of  
“ weather, and the face of the sky, that he may be  
“ prepared to take the full benefit of every gleam  
“ of sunshine, and every falling shower, how much  
“ more alert and attentive should we be, in watch-  
“ ing for those influences from above, which are  
“ necessary to ripen and mature a far more precious  
“ crop!

“ Permit me to suggest two or three heads of  
“ inquiry. You have sometimes felt a peculiar se-  
“ riousness of mind, the delusive glare of worldly  
“ objects has faded away, or become dim before your  
“ eyes, and death and eternity, appearing at the  
“ door, have filled the whole field of vision. Have  
“ you improved such seasons for fixing those maxims  
“ and establishing those practical conclusions, which  
“ may produce an habitual sobriety of mind, when  
“ things appear under a different aspect? You have  
“ sometimes found, instead of a reluctance to pray,  
“ a powerful impulse to that exercise, so that you  
“ felt as if you could do nothing else. Have you always  
“ complied with these motions, and suffered nothing  
“ but the claims of absolute necessity to divert you  
“ from pouring out your hearts at a throne of grace?  
“ The Spirit is said to make intercession for saints,

“ with groanings which cannot be uttered; when you  
“ have felt those ineffable longings after God, have  
“ you indulged them to the utmost? Have you spread  
“ every sail, launched forth into the deep of the  
“ divine perfections and promises, and possessed  
“ yourselves as much as possible of the fulness of  
“ God? There are moments when the conscience  
“ of a good man is more tender, has a nicer and  
“ more discriminating touch than usual: the evil of  
“ sin in general, and of his own in particular, ap-  
“ pears in a more pure and piercing light. Have  
“ you availed yourselves of such seasons as these for  
“ searching into ‘ the chambers of imagery,’ and  
“ while you detected greater and greater abomina-  
“ tions, been at pains to bring them out and slay  
“ them before the Lord? Have such visitations effect-  
“ ed something towards the mortification of sin?  
“ Or have they been suffered to expire in mere in-  
“ effectual resolutions? The fruits which godly sor-  
“ row produced in the Corinthians, are thus beauti-  
“ fully portrayed: ‘ What carefulness it wrought  
“ in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what  
“ indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement  
“ desire, yea what revenge!’ There are moments in  
“ the experience of a good man, when he feels a more  
“ than ordinary softness of mind; the frost of selfish-  
“ ness dissolves, and his heart flows forth in love to  
“ God and his fellow-creatures. How careful should  
“ we be to cherish such a frame, and to embrace



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“ the opportunity of subduing resentments, and of  
“ healing those scars and wounds which it is scarcely  
“ possible to avoid in passing through this unquiet  
“ world !

“ Remember, we as Christians profess a peculiar  
“ relation to God as his children, his witnesses, his  
“ people, his temple; the character of that glorious  
“ Being and of his religion will be contemplated  
“ by the world, chiefly through the medium of  
“ our spirit and conduct, which ought to display,  
“ as in a mirror, the virtues of him who hath  
“ called you out of darkness into his marvellous  
“ light. It is strictly appropriate to the subject  
“ of our present meditations, to remind you that  
“ you are ‘ temples.’ ‘ For ye,’ says the apostle,  
“ ‘ are the temple of the living God, as God hath  
“ said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them,  
“ and I will be their God, and they shall be my  
“ people.’ What purity, sanctity, and dignity may  
“ be expected in persons who bear such a cha-  
“ racter ! A Christian should look upon himself as  
“ something sacred and devoted, so that what in-  
“ volves but an ordinary degree of criminality in  
“ others, in him partakes of the nature of sacri-  
“ lege ; what is a breach of trust in others, is in him  
“ the profanation of a temple. Let us watch and  
“ pray that nothing may be allowed a place in our  
“ hearts that is not suitable to the residence of the  
“ holy and blessed God. Finally, having such great

“ and precious promises, dearly beloved, let us  
“ cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and  
“ spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the  
“ Lord.” (n)

(n) Letter on the Work of the Spirit, by R. Hall, A. M.

## LETTER XVIII.

*On Justification by Faith.*

HERE again, my dear friend, we enter controverted ground: and on such ground, indeed, you must expect to find me, nearly till we terminate our correspondence. This, however, does not arise from any obscurity in the subjects themselves, or from the vagueness of the terms in which they are revealed; but rather from the natural aversion of the unenlightened human mind to receive religious truth in the way God has been pleased to communicate it, and from that peculiarity of the Christian system which requires that “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men bowed down,” in order that “the Lord alone may be exalted.” (o)

It is the humiliating fact, that “*all* have sinned” and come short of the glory of God,” (p) that renders the Christian Religion necessary. Or, in other words, it is because “by the works of the law no flesh living *can* be justified,” that the new dispensation was requisite. If obedience be at all times our duty, in what way can present repentance release us, as some would argue, from the punishment of former transgressions? Can repentance annihilate what is

(o) 1s. ii. 11.

(p) See pp. 4, 41—46, of this volume.

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past? Or can we do more, by present obedience, than acquit ourselves of present obligation? Or does the contrition we experience, added to the positive duties we discharge, constitute a surplusage of merit, which may be transferred to the reduction of our former demerit? "We may as well affirm," says a learned divine, "that our former obedience atones for our present sins, as that our present obedience makes amends for antecedent transgressions?" No man can discharge an old debt merely by taking care to incur no fresh ones: and, in like manner, since sin is a debt to Divine justice (which demands undeviating rectitude and holiness), when once incurred it would not be cancelled merely by abstaining from sin in future;—supposing it were possible (which I am not inclined to admit) that sin could be entirely avoided without the aid of that restraining and invigorating principle which is implanted in the heart of a sincere believer on his conversion. (g) The question, then, to which not merely every philosophical inquirer, but every man who is interested about his eternal welfare, must be solicitous to receive a satisfactory answer, is, "How shall God be just, and

(g) As the due consideration of that branch of the argument which fixes the guilt of sin upon every individual, however he may have escaped all the grosser vices, would draw me too far from my present purpose, I beg to refer to ch. 5, of that valuable work, Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion," and to section 7 of the excellent Hooker's Discourse on Justification: and, for a striking proof of the practical necessity of the entire doctrine of the Trinity, to the first part of Bishop Beveridge's "Private Thoughts."

“ yet the justifier of the ungodly?” To this question the New Testament happily furnishes a most explicit reply. “ For when we were yet without strength, in “ due time *Christ died for the ungodly.*” (r) And how were the ungodly to avail themselves of the benefit resulting from the death of Christ? The scriptural reply is, “ *by faith.*” “ By him (Jesus) all “ who *believe* are justified from all things, from which “ they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” “ Being justified *freely* by his grace through the “ redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “ Man is “ *justified by faith*, without the works of the law.” “ He saved us not by *works* of justification, but according to his mercy.” “ By grace are ye saved “ *through FAITH, not of yourselves*, it is the gift of “ God; not of works, lest any man should glory.” “ Wherefore, being *justified by faith*, we have peace “ with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (s)

Such being the main tenour of the declarations in the New Testament, it is no wonder that the doctrine of *justification by faith* should in all ages have obtained a very general reception, or that infidels and others should in all ages have disputed it. “ You “ tell sinners (says Celsus), not to examine, but to “ believe; and their *faith* will save them;” which is just the language that it might be expected an uncandid opponent would adopt. (t) Our Reformers,

(r) Rom. v. 6.

(s) Acts, xiii. 39. Rom. iii. 24, 28. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Gal. ii. 16. Rom. v. 1.

(t) Orig. con. Cels. p. 8. Ed. 1658.

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whose views of most doctrinal points were remarkably clear and extensive, furnish us with abundant evidence, not of their opinions alone, but of those of much earlier writers, as to the subject before us.

“ After this wise (say they) to be justified only by  
“ this true and lively faith in Christ, speak all the  
“ old and ancient authors, both Greeks and Latins;  
“ of whom we will specially rehearse three, Hilary,  
“ Basil, and Ambrose. *St. Hilary* saith these words  
“ plainly in the ninth canon upon Matthew; ‘ Faith  
“ only justifieth.’ And *St. Basil*, a Greek author,  
“ writeth thus: ‘ This is a perfect and whole re-  
“ joicing in God, when a man advanceth not him-  
“ self for his own righteousness, but acknowledgeth  
“ himself to lack true justice and righteousness, and  
“ to be justified by the only faith in Christ.’

“ These be the very words of *St. Basil*; and *St.*  
“ *Ambrose*, a Latin author, hath these words: ‘ This  
“ is the ordinance of God, that they which believe  
“ in Christ shall be saved without works, by faith  
“ only, freely receiving the remission of their sins.’  
“ Consider diligently these words, ‘ without works  
“ by faith only freely we receive the remission of our  
“ sins.’ What can be spoken more plainly than to  
“ say, that freely without works, by faith only, we  
“ obtain remission of our sins? These, and other  
“ like sentences, that we be justified by faith only,  
“ freely, and without works, we read oft-times in the  
“ best and most ancient writers: as, beside Hilary,  
“ Basil, and Ambrose, before rehearsed, we read the

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“ same in Origen, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, St.  
“ Augustine, Prosper, Oecumenius, Proclus, Ber-  
“ nardus, Anselm, and many other authors, Greek  
“ and Latin. Nevertheless, this sentence, that we  
“ be justified by faith only, is not so meant of them  
“ that the same justifying faith is alone in man,  
“ without true repentance, hope, charity, dread, and  
“ the fear of God, at any time and season. Nor  
“ when they say that we should be justified freely,  
“ do they mean that we should or might afterwards  
“ be idle, and that nothing should be required on  
“ our parts afterward: neither do they mean so to  
“ be justified without good works, that we should do  
“ no good works at all, like as shall be more ex-  
“ pressed at large hereafter. But this saying, that  
“ we be justified by faith only, freely, and without  
“ works, is spoken to take away clearly all merit of  
“ our works, as being unable to deserve our justifica-  
“ tion at God’s hands, and thereby most plainly to  
“ express the weakness of man and the goodness of  
“ God; the great infirmity of ourselves, and the  
“ might and power of God; the imperfection of our  
“ own works, and the most abundant grace of our  
“ Saviour Christ; and therefore wholly to ascribe the  
“ merit and deserving of our justification unto Christ  
“ only, and his most precious blood-shedding. This  
“ faith the holy Scripture teacheth us; this doctrine  
“ all ancient authors of Christ’s church do approve;  
“ this doctrine *advanceth and setteth forth the true*  
“ *glory of Christ, and beateth down the vain-glory of*



“ *man; this, whosoever denieth, is not to be accounted*  
“ *for a Christian man, nor for a setter forth of*  
“ *Christ’s glory ; but for an adversary to Christ and*  
“ *his Gospel, and for a setter forth of men’s vain-*  
“ *glory.*

“ It hath been manifestly declared unto you, that  
“ no man can fulfil the law of God; and therefore  
“ by the law all men are condemned : whereupon it  
“ followeth necessarily, that some other things should  
“ be required for our salvation than the law; and  
“ that is, a true and lively faith in Christ, bringing  
“ forth good works, and a life according to God’s  
“ commandments. You heard also the ancient au-  
“ thors’ minds of this saying, ‘ Faith in Christ only  
“ justifieth man,’ so plainly declared, that you see  
“ that the very true meaning of this proposition or  
“ saying, ‘ We be justified by faith in Christ only,’  
“ is this: We put our faith in Christ, that we be  
“ justified by him only, that we be justified by God’s  
“ free mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ  
“ only, and by no virtue or good works of our own  
“ that is in us, or that we can be able to have, or to  
“ do, for to deserve the same ; Christ himself only  
“ being the cause meritorious thereof. Here you  
“ perceive many words to be used to avoid contention  
“ in words with them that delight to brawl about  
“ words, and also to show the true meaning to avoid  
“ evil-taking and misunderstanding; and yet perad-  
“ venture all will not serve with them that be conten-  
“ tious; but contenders will ever forge matters of

“contention, even when they have no occasion  
“thereto.” (v)

And thus, as it should seem, it happens that the adversaries of the doctrine of justification by faith, some from pure ignorance, others from a love of calumny, affirm that it is a doctrine which leads to licentiousness. But “it is a childish cavil,” says good old Hooker, (w) “wherewith in the matter of justification our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaiming that we tread all Christian virtues under our feet, and require nothing but faith, because we teach that faith alone justifieth; whereas, by this speech, we never meant to exclude either hope or charity, from being always joined as inseparable handmates:—but to show that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ unto justification, and Christ the only garment which being so put on covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfection of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God: before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea, to shut us from the kingdom of heaven.”

To decide, however, in this important inquiry, from the nature of things as revealed in Scripture, and not from any appeal to inferior authority, let us attend to three questions: What is meant by *justifi-*

(v) Homily on Salvation, pp. 20, 21, 23. Oxford ed. 1810.

(w) Discourse on Justification.

*cation?* What by *faith*? What is the genuine import of the term *justification by faith*?

I. With regard to *justification*; it manifestly in its primary sense has relation to accusation. Those who have committed no crime, or omitted no binding duty, are free from guilt, or reasonable *charge* of guilt; but may still require justification. If there be no accusation or charge brought against a person, he does not stand in need of being justified: but when he is accused of a crime of which he is entirely innocent, he thence has an opportunity of justifying himself by making his innocence appear; and his *judge* has thence an opportunity of justifying him by *pronouncing* or *declaring* publicly that he *is* innocent of the crimes laid to his charge. This is justification according to its original meaning: but in this sense none can, strictly speaking, be justified, since *all* are sinners, and all are accused; for the law accuses, Satan accuses, and conscience accuses. The *law* accuses: for “all are made under the law,” and “we know (says Paul) that what things soever the law saith it saith to those that are under the law; so that every mouth is stopped, and all the world becometh subject to the judgment of God.” (x) So again *Satan* accuses. He is the “Prince of this world,” “the adversary, the false accuser,” “the accuser of the brethren, that accuses them before God day and night.” (y) And farther, *conscience*, that mighty

(x) Rom. iii. 19.

(y) John, xii. 31, 1 Pet. v. 8. Rev. xii. 10.

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troubler of the human breast, is a frequent accuser. Paul, speaking of the Gentiles, says, “their conscience beareth witness, and their thoughts accuse “or excuse one another.” (z) And truly none but those who have learnt by experience, can tell fully what the pangs inflicted by a guilty and awakened conscience are. A man may flee from many calamities, and bear up with dignity and patience under others; but he can no more flee from an accusing conscience than he can flee from himself. “The spirit of a man “may sustain his infirmity: but a *wounded spirit who “can bear?*” (a)

Against such accusers, retaining the primary interpretation of the word, “no flesh living can be “justified.” We must look, then, for some other acceptance of the term. And thus we find that by the phrase to justify is often meant so to do a man right, as to pronounce sentence in his favour, to acquit him from guilt, to excuse him from burden, to liberate him from punishment, and to repute or deem him just. Thus in one of these senses “wisdom” is said to be “justified of her children:” and thus justification, in a still more extended sense, is not opposed to accusation merely, but to *condemnation*. As in the observation of Solomon,—“He “that *justifieth* the wicked, and he that *condemneth* “the just, even they both are an abomination to the “Lord;” and in the declaration of Jesus Christ,

(z) Rom. ii. 15.

(a) Prov. xviii. 14.

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“ By thy words thou shalt be *justified*, and by thy words thou shalt be *condemned*.” (b)

In the evangelical acceptation of the term, as it is applied by the apostle Paul, justification is “ of God,” and imports his acquitting us from guilt, condemnation, and punishment, by free and full remission of our sins, *reputing* and *declaring* us just persons, and dealing with us as though we were upright and innocent in his esteem. For this apostle treats of justification as an act of judgment performed by God, by which he declares his own righteousness and justice, and at the same time our liberation from the punishment due to transgression : his justice consisting in accepting a competent satisfaction offered in lieu of the debt due to him, and in reparation of the injury done to him, by reason of which the debtor is acquitted and the offence remitted. “ For now a Divine justification (saith this apostle in his Epistle to the Romans) independently of the law, is discovered, being testified by the law and the prophets ; that divine justification is extended to *all* that believe ; for there is no distinction ; for all having sinned, all have forfeited the praise of God : being justified of free gift by his grace through the redemption that is by Jesus Christ : whom God hath ordained to be a propitiatory through faith in his blood, for the manifestation of his rectitude, in passing over and remitting their past transgressions through Divine forbearance : to manifest,

(b) Prov. xvii. 15. Matt. xii. 37.

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“ also, his rectitude at this time: that he may appear  
 “ to be just, and the justifier of him who trusts in  
 “ Jesus.” (c) Hence, we see, that justification is a  
 result of Christ’s redemption; that remission of sins  
 is so likewise; and that they may be considered as  
 synonymous expressions; God demonstrating by ei-  
 ther or both of them his justice and goodness. Jus-  
 tification, in fine, including in St. Paul’s view at  
 least *an acquittal from guilt and condemnation, and a*  
*being regarded as righteous, with “ God who jus-*  
*“ tifieth.”*

II. I propose, in the next place, to ascertain what  
 is the evangelical interpretation of the word *faith*,  
 as it relates to justification. I make the inquiry with  
 this restriction, because it is evident, as was indeed  
 remarked by Chrysostom, (d) that the word πιστις,  
 usually rendered faith, is variously employed in Scrip-

(c) Rom. iii. 21—26. The above will, I believe, be found a cor-  
 rect rendering of the passage. That it is not much distorted to accord  
 with a particular hypothesis will be evident on comparing it with  
 the Socinian version, which is this: “ Without a law, God’s method  
 “ of justification is manifested; being attested by the law and the  
 “ prophets; even to all [and upon all] who believe; for there is no  
 “ difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;  
 “ being justified of free bounty, even by his favour, through the re-  
 demption which is by Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth as a  
 “ mercy-seat in his own blood; to show his method of justification  
 “ concerning the remission of past sins, through the forbearance of  
 “ God; to show, I say, his method of justification at this present  
 “ time: that he might be just, and the justifier of him who hath  
 “ faith in Jesus.”

(d) Homil. xxvi. in Epist. ad Hebræos xi.

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ture. I also confine myself entirely here to the kind of faith required of those who possess the Gospel; not wishing to embarrass the question with any thing relative to such as have never had it proposed to them.

1. This faith is something more than simple belief, or that assent of the understanding, which neither affects the heart nor the conduct. For, Paul speaks of “believing in the *heart*” as essential to salvation, because “with the heart man believeth to *righteousness*” or justification.” (e)

2. This faith is something different from believing that the Scriptures are the word of God, and that all things contained in them are true. For this, as Dr. Doddridge remarks, is liable to a double objection; as on the one hand it supposes it absolutely necessary that every man should believe both the plenary inspiration, and the extent of it to *all* the books of Scripture; which, though it may admit of strong proof, can never be shown to be a thing the belief of which is *absolutely requisite to salvation*: and on the other hand, an implicit and entire belief in this, may be yielded by a mind which is grossly ignorant of, or sadly misapplies, some of the most important doctrines of Christianity.

3. This faith presupposes a conviction of the corruption of our nature, a lively and painful sense of the guilt of sin, a solicitude to be delivered from it;

(e) Rom. x. 9, 10.



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and implies a persuasion that through the mystery of redemption "there is forgiveness with God, that he "may be feared;" but it does not *necessarily* imply a *persuasion* that God hath remitted *our* sins: for it relates to propositions revealed by God; and God has no where declared that he has remitted *our* sins individually. He has, indeed, declared that he will pardon our transgressions, and "blot out our iniquities," if we cordially and sincerely comply with certain requisitions; but the ascertaining that we have so complied is matter of *experience*, and not of faith. When we distrust God, we want true faith; but it is possible we may possess faith, although we distrust ourselves. The observation of the wisest of men was, "Blessed is he that *feareth* always;" so feareth as to excite solicitude and watchfulness over his heart and conduct: and to render him diligent to "make his calling and election sure." The great danger is on the side of presumption, arrogance, and self-confidence, and not where lies humility, diffidence, and poverty of spirit, which God has assured us he loves.

4. Much less is that a correct notion of faith which defines it to be 'a *firm and certain knowledge* of God's 'eternal good will towards us particularly, and that 'we shall be saved.' For according to this a man must possess a certain knowledge both of his present sincerity and sanctity, and of his perseverance: and, farther, if he be not *sure* he has repented and is converted, it would follow from this definition that he must be *sure* he is not converted, which would be truly

perplexing and discouraging to most persons of genuine humility and lowliness of mind. On this thorny position I beg to confirm my own sentiments by the authority and the arguments of Dr. Barrow. “ We  
“ may consider,” he says, “ 1. That this doctrine in-  
“ verts and confounds the order of things declared in  
“ Scripture, wherein faith is set *before* obtaining God’s  
“ good will, as a prerequisite condition thereto, and  
“ is made a means of salvation (‘ without faith it is  
“ *impossible* to please God.’ ‘ By grace are ye saved  
“ *through faith.*’) And if we must believe, before  
“ God loves us (with such a love as we speak of), and  
“ before we can be saved; then must we *know* that we  
“ believe, before we can know that God loves us, or  
“ that we shall be saved, and consequently we must  
“ indeed believe before we can know that God loves  
“ us, or that we shall be saved. But this doctrine  
“ makes the knowledge of God’s love and of salvation  
“ in nature antecedent to faith, as being an essential  
“ ingredient in it; which is preposterous. Consider  
“ this circle of discourse: a man cannot know that  
“ he believes unless he does believe, this is certain:  
“ a man cannot know that he shall be saved, without  
“ knowing he doth believe; this is also certain: for  
“ upon what ground, from what evidence, can he  
“ know his salvation, but by knowing his faith? But  
“ again, backward: a man, say they, cannot believe  
“ (and consequently not know that he believes) with-  
“ out being assured of his salvation. What an inex-  
“ tricable maze and confusion is here! This doctrine

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“ indeed doth make the *knowledge* of a future event  
“ to be the *cause* of its being future ; it supposes God  
“ to become our friend (as he was of Abraham by his  
“ faith), by our *knowing* that he is our friend ; it  
“ makes us to obtain a reward, by knowing that we  
“ *shall* obtain it ; it supposes the assurance of our  
“ coming to a journey’s end, to be the way of getting  
“ thither ; which who can conceive intelligible, or  
“ true ? Our Saviour doth indeed tell us, that it is  
“ *the way to life* everlasting (or conducive to the at-  
“ taining it) *to know the true God and Jesus Christ*  
“ *whom he hath sent* : but he doth not say it is life  
“ everlasting (or conducive to the obtaining it) to  
“ know that we *shall* have life everlasting : that were  
“ somewhat strange to say. St. Peter exhorts us to  
“ *use diligence to make our calling and election sure*, or  
“ firm and stable : but he doth not bid us to know it  
“ to be sure. If we did know it to be so, what need  
“ should we have to *make* it so ? yea, how could we  
“ make it so ? He doth not enjoin us to be sure of  
“ it in our opinion, but to secure it in the event  
“ by sincere obedience, and a holy life : by so im-  
“ pressing this persuasion upon our minds, so rooting  
“ the love of God and his truth in our hearts, that  
“ no temptation may be able to subvert our faith, or  
“ to pluck out our charity.

“ 2. This notion plainly supposes the truth of that  
“ doctrine, that no man, being once in God’s favour,  
“ can ever quite lose it, yet is thereby everted : for it  
“ follows thence, that no man, who doth not assent

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“ to that doctrine, is, or can be, a believer: for he  
 “ that is not assured of the truth of that opinion (al-  
 “ though we suppose him assured of his own sin-  
 “ cerity, and being in a state of grace,) cannot know  
 “ that he shall be saved; so that only such as agree  
 “ with them in that opinion can be *believers*, which  
 “ is somewhat hard, or rather, very absurd. And  
 “ to aggravate this inconvenience, I adjoin, 3. That  
 “ according to their notion, scarce any man (except  
 “ some have had an especial revelation concerning  
 “ their salvation,) before the late alterations in Chris-  
 “ tendom, was a believer; for before that time it  
 “ hardly appears that any man did believe, as they  
 “ do, that a man cannot fall from grace; and there-  
 “ fore scarce any man could be always assured that  
 “ he should be saved: and therefore scarce any man  
 “ could be a believer in their sense.” (f) To these  
 observations I have only to add, that faith, according  
 to this interpretation of it, leaves no room for the ex-  
 ercise of *hope*; and since, as we have seen, it neces-  
 sarily classes the humble Christian who is conscious  
 that ‘the heart is deceitful above all things,’ and is  
 therefore ‘working out his own salvation with *fear and*  
 ‘*trembling*,’ among unbelievers, it stifles *charity*; and  
 thus banishes two out of the three associate Christian  
 Graces.

5. True faith implies acts of mind, acts of will,  
 and subjection of conduct. It is called ‘*faith in*  
 ‘*Christ*,’ and includes not merely belief in Christ-

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ianity, belief in Jesus as the Messiah; but a *practical* assent to all that the Gospel reveals concerning him, an inward conviction and a full persuasion of his all-sufficiency, in his complex character, to suffer and die, to rise and save, to fulfil every thing that was necessary for a Mediator, in order to reconcile guilty creatures to an offended God; and consequently an entire resigning of our souls to him for salvation in his appointed way. It is also termed ‘faith in the *name* of ‘Christ,’ ‘faith in his *blood*,’ ‘faith in his *righteousness*,’ (g) implying an acknowledgment of worthlessness and insufficiency in ourselves, and a depending on what the Saviour has done and suffered, for our pardon and acceptance. It farther includes ‘coming to Christ’ in the way of his commandments, and a firm and *prevailing* resolution of sincere obedience, such as, though it may unhappily be sometimes precipitated by temptation into sinful *actions*, does not, dare not, fall into a sinful *course*, but manifests itself in a ‘purified’ heart, a ‘sanctified’ conduct, and exalted attainments in ‘righteousness, even the ‘righteousness which is of faith.’ (h)

With regard to this true faith it has justly been observed, that “the words  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  and  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ , which continually return upon us in reading the Greek Testament, should be frequently translated by *trust* and *trusting* in God, or Christ, especially where the preposition  $\epsilon\upsilon$  or  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  is added to it: and it should

(g) John, i. 12. Rom. iii. 25. Col. i. 20. 2 Pet. i. 1.

(h) Rom. ix. 30.

“ not be so often called belief or believing; for it is  
 “ not such a *mere assent* to the Gospel of Christ as  
 “ excites hope or trust in mercy, and so draws forth  
 “ the soul to love God, repent of sin, and fulfil the  
 “ duties of holiness.

“ The Hebrew words, which, in the Old Testa-  
 “ ment, imply trust and dependence, are represent-  
 “ ed often by *πιστευω* in the New Testament, as well  
 “ as those which signify belief or assent. And there-  
 “ fore David in the Psalms, where he expresses the  
 “ inward actings of his soul towards God, is ever  
 “ using the words *trust* and *hope*; and the translators  
 “ of the New Testament should have much oftener  
 “ used them to express the true meaning of the words  
 “ *πιστις* and *πιστευω* in the sacred writers. As John, xiv.  
 “ 1, ‘ Ye *trust* in God, *trust* also in me.’ Acts,  
 “ xvi. 31, ‘ *Trust* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and  
 “ thou shalt be saved.’ Mark, vi. 22, ‘ Have *trust* in  
 “ God.’ Acts, xx. 21, ‘ Repentance towards God,  
 “ and *trust* in our Lord Jesus Christ;’ and many  
 “ other places. This is the constant sentiment of  
 “ our Protestant divines in their opposition to the  
 “ Papists, that *fides est fiducia.*” (i)

Lastly, with respect to true faith, it may be re-  
 marked that though good works are distinct from it,  
 so distinct indeed that they are frequently opposed;  
 though they do not give value to it, but it renders *them*  
 acceptable; yet they always accompany it as its pecu-

(i) Watts's Harmony of all Religions, ch. viii.

liar fruit and genuine effect : proceeding as naturally from it as water flows from a fountain, or light emanates from the sun. (k) They are also the touchstone of faith, its evidence and measure. Faith itself is unseen, being seated in the heart ; but holiness and good works, where life is continued, bring it forth to public view, and make it tend to public benefit. Where there is much faith, much will be produced ; where there is but little faith there will be proportionally little holiness ; and where there is no faith, no “ fruit ” is to be expected. Hence, hypocrites and men of spurious faith are described as “ clouds without water, carried aside by winds : trees whose fruit withereth, *barren*, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” (l)

III. Let us now proceed to inquire what is the evangelical interpretation of *Justification by faith* ? How, according to the scheme developed in the Christian dispensation, is a man to obtain the blessing of justification, when he seeks it at first, or when, through his frailty or unfaithfulness, he needs a renewal of it ? The correct answer, I apprehend, is that he is to seek it with sole recourse to God in Christ through the medium of faith, and to look entirely off

(k) “ The fruits of faith (says Bishop Hall) are good works ; whether inward, within the roof of the heart, as love, awe, sorrow, piety, zeal, joy, and the rest ; or outward towards God, or our brethren ; obedience and service to the one, to the other relief and beneficence : these he bears in his time ; sometimes all, but always some.” See also Baxter’s Paraphrase on Luke, xxiii. 43.

(l) Jude 12.



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himself to the fountain of grace for mercy. This is not the meritorious but the *appointed* condition, by reason of which, through the riches of Divine mercy “a mutual transfer is made of the sins of men to Christ, and of Christ’s righteousness to men.” (*m*) But man needs a righteousness *imparted* as well as a righteousness *imputed*; he therefore goes to God that he may possess a “meetness” as well as a title for heaven; he goes that he may be “quickened,” and when so quickened he will be *another man* in God’s reckoning (who cannot be supposed not duly to estimate his creatures according to what he has made them to be), and generally, though not always, in his own conscious feeling. God, as I have seen it somewhere admirably expressed, ‘will admit him into spiritual life wholly for Christ’s sake;—but he will esteem him *spiritually alive* only in consequence of his own gift of *living faith*. And he makes this living faith the *exclusive test*, because this alone is the vitalizing tie; every thing else lives by this,—but this lives through God alone.’

The inspired writers of the New Testament consider man as he really is, that is, both as *guilty* and *depraved*; and they make us acquainted with the remedies God has graciously provided both for our guilt and our depravity. They assure us that on the exercise of a lively faith we are justified from former sins, and brought into a state of acceptance with God, by

(*m*) This is the language of Dr. Tomline.

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virtue of the *atonement*: “the blood of Christ  
“cleanseth from all sin:” and to meet our wants in  
the second case, or as theological writers frequently  
designate it, ‘to preserve us in a *state* of justifi-  
‘cation,’ we are promised the aids of the Spirit to  
renew the heart, and effectually lead us on to the per-  
formance of duty; this also being promised as a con-  
sequence of true faith. “Being justified by faith we  
“have peace with God; because the love of God is  
“shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which  
“is given unto us.” (n)

Now, he must have eagle-eyes that, in all this, can detect any thing like a tendency to licentiousness. For, while faith is inculcated as the medium of justification, good works are equally enforced as the necessary concomitants, and only genuine evidence (to men) of true faith. Besides, it must not be forgotten, that though by justification we are freed from punishment, and brought into a state of acceptance, yet, as the justification described by Paul is a state without degrees, it does not, nor ever was intended to, furnish the measure of the degrees of future happiness. Though we are brought into a state of justification independently of good works; yet the degrees of future happiness will be apportioned to “our works  
“of faith and labours of love,” performed subsequently to “the renewal of our minds” by Divine influences. Hence it is that we are exhorted to “grow in grace,”

(n) Rom. v. 1, 5.

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to “press forward” to more exalted attainments, to be more and more “transformed into the image of “God;” that we may in due time obtain a larger portion of that “blessing of the dead who die in “the Lord, who rest from their labours, and their “works do follow them.” (o)

I cannot close this letter without adverting to the supposed collision of sentiments between the apostles Paul and James, as to the matter of justification. Yet it is simply necessary to remark that these two writers were treating of different topics, and for the benefit of persons of different characters and views. “Paul speaks of justification before God, James of “justification before men; Paul speaks of the justifi- “cation of the person, James of the justification of a “man’s cause, as the truth of his faith, or the up- “rightness of his conduct; Paul speaks of works as “the causes of justification, James of them as the “effects and evidences of faith; Paul had to do with “self-judiciaries, who trusted in their own works for “justification; James with *Gnostics*, who slighted and “neglected the performance of them.” (p)

On the whole you will now, I trust, perceive in what way it is that “faith *establishes* the law,” and that those who reject the mode of justification by faith do in reality “make void the law.” You will see, too, that there is no erecting a system of justification through the conjoined efficacy of faith and

(o) Rev. xiv. 13.

(p) Gill on Rom. iv. 2. See also Hooker on justification, § 6, 20, 21.

works. Your submission to the way of God's appointment must be complete, without reservation, or self-dependance. "By grace are ye saved *through faith*, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; *not of works*, lest any man should boast:" yet, on the other hand, it is not without holiness; for "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*" (q) Be careful then, my friend, that your faith be genuine and efficacious, that it "work by love," that it "purify the heart," that it "preserve from temptation," that it "overcome the world," that it cherish humility, watchfulness, and self-examination. "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man try his own work; and then he will have glorying in himself alone, and not in another." "Be not deceived, God is not deluded: for whatsoever a man soweth, that he will reap also. For he who soweth to his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction: but he who soweth to *the Spirit*, from the Spirit will reap everlasting life. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." (r)

(q) Heb. xii. 14.

(r) Gal. vi. 3—9.

## LETTER XIX.

*On Providence.*

ALTHOUGH great confusion and uncertainty were evinced in the notions both of the vulgar and the philosophic ancient Pagans, with regard to the unceasing superintending providence of one or more superior beings; yet there were but few among them that positively and constantly denied that doctrine in every sense. Several of them doubted it in *some* of their speculations; others fancied that the Deity by intermeddling with human concerns would degrade and pollute himself: but scarcely any of them *ridiculed* the notion, while some reasoned forcibly in favour of it, and derived from it consolation and delight. Thus Thales of Miletus taught that the world was the work of God, and that God sees and directs the most secret thoughts in the heart of man. Simplicius, the celebrated commentator on Aristotle, argued that if God do not look to the affairs of the world, it is either because he cannot, or will not: the first, (said he,) is absurd, since to govern cannot be difficult, where to create was easy; and the latter is both absurd and blasphemous. Theon of Alexandria taught that a full persuasion of God's seeing every thing we do is the strongest incentive to virtue; and represented this belief concerning the Deity as productive of the

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greatest pleasure imaginable, especially to the virtuous, who might depend with the greater confidence on the favour and protection of Providence: he recommended nothing so much as meditation on the presence of God; and he advised the civil magistrate, by way of restraint on such as were profane and wicked, to have in large characters at the corner of every street, this inscription—*GOD SEES THEE, O SINNER!* That great heathen emperor and philosopher, Marcus Antoninus, fully persuaded of the existence and government of God, maintained that the best thing for a man is that which God sends him, and the best time that when he sends it; and so far was he from adopting the comfortless system now propagated by many professing Christians, as well as infidels, that notwithstanding he governed the greatest of all empires in the deepest calm, and commanded all the enjoyments that splendour, wealth, and regal dignity could furnish, even to a well-ordered mind, he still exclaimed, “*What would it concern ME to live in a world void of*”  
“*God and without PROVIDENCE!*”

How lamentable is the contrast between the sentiments of these heathens on this topic, immersed as they were in the grossest ignorance as to the fundamentals of religious truth, and those of the many who, though enjoying the full blaze of scientific and religious knowledge in a Christian country, ridicule this consoling doctrine. How strange, that while, conformably with the wise observation of Lord Bacon, “it is heaven upon earth to have a man’s mind move

“ in charity, *rest in providence*, and turn upon the “ poles of truth,”<sup>(s)</sup> there should be found men of ingenuity and literature, who dazzle by their talents and delude by their wit, yet will boldly affirm “ that “ the doctrine of the immediate and perpetual inter- “ ference of Divine Providence, *is not true*,”—and insinuate that it is “ ridiculous, degrading,” and dangerous. <sup>(t)</sup>

In opposition to the assertion just quoted, I will venture to declare, and hope I shall be able to prove, that the doctrine of the *particular*, as well as that of the *universal*, Providence of God, is revealed clearly in Scripture, is confirmed by history, and is compatible with the established principles of philosophy.

Now, that the persuasion that the Providence of God extended to all times and places, and to every individual, was prevalent among the primitive Christians, is evident from the language of CÆCILIUS, a Roman lawyer, and then one of their most skilful opposers, though he became a convert to the truth, by reason of his controversy with Octavius. He objected against them that they asserted “ a Providence “ as extending to the affairs and actions of men, “ and even to their most secret thoughts.” He represented it as very absurd in them to believe that “ their “ God, whom they can neither see nor show, inspects “ diligently into the manners of all men, into their “ actions, and even their words and hidden thoughts :

<sup>(s)</sup> Lord Bacon's Essay on Truth.

<sup>(t)</sup> Edinburgh Review, vol. xi. pp. 356, 357.



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“ and that he is every where present, troublesome, and  
 “ impertinently busy and curious; since he interests  
 “ himself in all things that are done, and thrusts him-  
 “ self into all places: whereas, he can neither attend  
 “ to every particular whilst he is employed about the  
 “ whole; nor be able to take care of the whole, be-  
 “ ing occupied about particulars.” (v)

Let me next select two or three passages to show that this notion of the early Christians was derived from the Bible. From the Old Testament I first quote part of the language of God to *Job*, in which he asserts not only his power, but his providence.

“ Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflow-  
 “ ing of waters? or a way for the lightning of thunder,  
 “ to cause it to rain on the earth? to satisfy the  
 “ desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of  
 “ the tender herb to spring forth. Hath the rain a  
 “ father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?  
 “ Who provideth for the raven his food?” (w)

*David* abounds with references to the providence of God. “ The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and thou  
 “ givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest  
 “ thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living  
 “ thing. The Lord preserveth all them that love him;  
 “ but all the wicked will he destroy.” “ The Lord  
 “ openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth  
 “ them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the

(v) Min. Fel. p. 95. Edit. var. 1762.

(w) Job, xxxviii. 25—27, 41.

“ righteous. The Lord preserveth the strangers ; He  
 “ relieveth the fatherless and the widow ; but the way  
 “ of the wicked he turneth upside down.” “ He pre-  
 “ pareth rain for the earth, he maketh grass to grow  
 “ upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his  
 “ food, and to the young ravens which cry.” (x)

Again, the prophet *Ezekiel*, in one of his delightful parables where he describes the security, prosperity, and universality of the Messiah’s kingdom, under the metaphor of a flourishing “ branch,” concludes by a forcible declaration of the minuteness as well as the extent of God’s providence, still keeping up his allusion :—“ And all the trees of the field shall know  
 “ that I, THE LORD, have brought down the high  
 “ tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the  
 “ green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish :  
 “ I, the Lord, have spoken and have done it.” (y)

Since, then, the Divine Being is “ the same  
 “ yesterday, to day, and for ever,” without “ vari-  
 “ ableness or shadow of turning,” (z) and since his Providence was constantly and universally manifested, in the times of Moses, Job, David, Daniel, and Ezekiel ; it would be absurd to imagine that it should now, or at any time, become dormant, or partially evinced. But we need not stop here. The proofs from the New Testament might be extracted from

(x) Ps. cxlv. 15, 16. 20. cxlvi. 8, 9. cxlvii. 8, 9.

(y) Ezek. xvii. 24. See also Prov. xvi. 33. Dan. v. 29. Deut. xxxii. 39 ; and 1 Sam. ii. 6—9.

(z) Heb. xiii. 8. James, i. 17.

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almost every page. A *few* of them only I shall request you to consult on the present occasion. For declarations of the extent and universality of Providence read Matt. vi. 19—34. x. 29—31. Luke xii. 6, 7, 22—31. That all things are fixed under its conduct, is declared in Acts, xvii. 26. Our entire dependence upon Providence is taught in James, iv. 13—17. And that it is most remarkably manifested in the care of good men, may be learnt from Acts, xxiii. 17—52. xxv. 4, 21—27. xxvi. 21, 22, 32. That we owe every thing which is conducive to life and piety to God's Providence, is taught by Peter, 2 Epist. i. 3: and by Paul in numerous places.

Indeed the connexion established between piety and prayer, on which its growth depends, and the acknowledgement of a particular Providence included in the performance of prayer, must with all considerate persons be decisive on this point. We are exhorted to “pray with the spirit, and the understanding also,” to “pray without ceasing,” to “ask that we may receive,” to “seek that we may find,” to “knock that it may be opened to us:” we are told that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint;” that God “hears and *answers* prayer,” that “all things whatsoever we ask in prayer, *believing*, “we shall receive:” (a) &c. But unless the Supreme Being holds constant intercourse with his

(a) 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Rom. v. 17. Matt. vii. 7. Luke, xviii. 1. Matt. xxi. 22, &c.

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creatures; unless, as the Psalmist expresses it, “ his ear is always open to their cry,” and “ his hand ” ready to be “ stretched out ” to assist those who trust in him, prayer is an absurdity; and Jesus and his apostles, in exhorting us to frequency and fervency in prayer, trifled with our wants and distresses, and urged us to render ourselves ridiculous by an indulgence in solemn mummery. Prayer obviously implies God’s universal agency; that he is able to attend to the separate wants of each individual among the millions of his creatures, and ready to furnish his providential supplies as they are needed, and where they are solicited with a proper spirit.

James, after assuring us that the “ fervent prayer “ of a righteous man availeth much,” informs us that “ *Elias* was a man, subject to like passions as “ we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not “ rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years “ and six months: and he prayed again, and the heaven “ gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.” We also learn from the Pentateuch that, when God in his anger sent fire among the Israelites which consumed even “ in the uttermost part of the camp, “ the people cried unto Moses: and when *Moses* “ prayed unto the Lord *the fire was quenched.*” (b) Now on both these occasions the interposition of Providence was vouchsafed in answer to prayer. We

(b) James, v. 16—18. 1 Kings, xvii. 1. xviii, 42—45. Num. xi. 2.

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have here nothing to do with the reason of the connexion subsisting between prayer and providential supply of blessings or removal of calamity; but with the fact that such connexion does subsist, and with the promise that such connexion always will subsist, for this fact and this promise being incontrovertible, it is equally incontrovertible, that the providence of God reaches to all persons and things; their comparative insignificance or grandeur in our estimation forming no scale for him; but all and each being dealt with according to the rules of matchless wisdom, righteousness, and mercy.

The doctrine of a particular or special providence is, therefore, a doctrine of Scripture: and that it is confirmed by history is strikingly manifest. Thus the history of revealed religion is in truth the history of Providence. Trace, for example, the stories of Joseph, of David, or of Jeroboam. Men usually assign no cause for the conveyance of Joseph into Egypt but the envy of his brethren; for Shimei's reviling David, but his base malignity; for David's success against Goliath, but his skill in using the sling; for his numbering the people, but his ridiculous pride; for Rehoboam's revolt, but his unruly ambition. Yet, if you look beyond the surface, you will find that these were foreseen, and, if I may so say, *projected* into their respective places, for the most important purposes. Fix your attention for a moment upon the case of David. It was the intention of Providence to place him upon the throne of

the Hebrews. The country is invaded by a foreign enemy: the hostile armies meet and lie encamped upon opposite mountains. A man comes forth from the army of the invaders, as was extremely common in those times, and defies the Hebrew host to send forth a champion to meet him in single combat. Terrified by the gigantic bulk and mighty force of Goliath, no man would risk the unequal conflict. David, who was too young to carry arms, had been sent to the camp with provisions for his brothers, and heard the challenge. In defence of his flock he had killed some beasts of prey in the wilderness, and he was an excellent marksman with the sling. He thought it might probably be as easy to kill a man as a wild beast; at all events, he knew that a stone well directed would prove no less fatal to a giant than to a dwarf: he therefore resolved to try his skill, and he tried it with success. Here no man's free-will was interrupted, and no miracle was accomplished; yet by this *train* of circumstances thus *brought* together, a foundation was laid for the future fortunes of the son of Jesse, for the greatness of his country, and for accomplishing the purposes of Providence.

Observe, again, the chain of events which led to the birth of Christ, and to the place where he was born. They related to individuals who, in human reckoning, were amongst the most mean and ignoble; and yet upon these persons, their concerns, their journeyings, their tarryings, hung the destinies of thousands and tens of thousands, in every age.

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In like manner we may trace in civil history the dependence of momentous concerns upon mere trifles. The bare sight of a fig, shown in the senate-house at Rome, occasioned the destruction of Carthage. (c) A few boughs of trees, carried by soldiers from Birnam Wood to Dunsinane, (d) produced the terror and discomfiture of Macbeth, by which even-handed "justice" commended

" The ingredients of his poison'd chalice

" To his own lips."

The accidental finding of a dropped letter led to the detection and prevention of the "Gunpowderplot." These and other *apparent* accidents are not the offspring of chance, but result from the silent operation of God's providence, which "doth not hurry along  
" like an impetuous rumbling torrent; but glideth on  
" as a smooth and still current, with an irresistible  
" but imperceptible force, carrying things down  
" therewith: without much ado, without any clatter,  
" by a nod of his head, by a whisper of his mouth,  
" by a turn of his hand, he doth effect his purposes:  
" winding up a close spring, he setteth the greatest  
" wheels in motion; and thrusting in an insensible  
" spoke, he stoppeth the greatest wheels in their

(c) Quod non Trebia, aut Trasymenus, non Cannæ busto insignes Romani nominis perficere potuerunt; non Castra Punica ad tertium lapidem vallata, portæque; Collinæ adæquitans ipse Hannibal. Plin.

(d) Heylin's *Cosmography*, p. 272.



“ career; injecting a thought, exciting a humour,  
“ presenting an occasion, insinuating a petty acci-  
“ dent, he bringeth about the most notable events.” (e)

Nor is all this in any respect incompatible with the received principles of natural philosophy, but, as I conceive, perfectly consistent with them. From the train of argument suggested near the commencement of my first letter, you would see that it is a necessary consequence of the creation of the world, that both it, and every creature in it, only continues in existence through the constant energy of the power which created; that is, supposing the world to be created from nothing, the hypothesis usually entertained. If, indeed, we assume the hypothesis most favourable to the sentiments of those who deny the incessant operation of Providence, and say that matter always existed, we shall not thence supersede the necessity of providential superintendence and control. For, from many experiments made in the course of the last century, it is highly probable, nay, it is certain, that the particles which constitute even the most solid bodies, are not *all* in contact; yet that a very considerable force is required to separate farther from each other the parts of a mass of wood, iron, or stone. It also appears that great force is requisite to bring bodies, however small, or highly polished, into *apparent* contact; whence they must be kept asunder by some extraneous power. So that the cohesive

(e) Barrow on the Unsearchableness of God's Judgments.

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force by which the moleculæ of matter are retained together, as well as the repulsive force by which they are kept at certain distances, demonstrate, with regard to every body in the universe, animated or inanimate, that the immediate and perpetual agency of something that is not matter, is necessary to preserve them in the state in which they now appear. So again it has been shown (*f*) that from all action of body upon body motion is impaired, and the quantity of it constantly decaying in the universe. Hence, since matter cannot re-excite the motion in itself, it follows that as an immaterial power first impressed motion on matter, so it still re-produces the motion lost, and makes up the decays sustained. Also, since the forms and motions of bodies are sustained, and in all of them an end is thus pursued, a law obeyed, wise purposes evinced and accomplished, the power which is constantly operating to effect all this must be combined with intelligence; and what can be every where and at all times thus exhibiting power and intelligence but God, either immediately or by his subordinate instruments?

But it may still be asked, and indeed *has* been asked, can there be a particular providence, a providence that suits the several cases and prayers of individuals, without a continual repetition of miracles or without frequent infringements upon the laws of nature, and the freedom of intelligent agents? This

(*f*) Newton's Optics, pp. 373, 375. 4th ed.

question may safely be answered in the affirmative; and I cannot do better than lay before you some of the reasons for so answering it, as they have been stated by the ingenious author of “The Religion of Nature Delineated.”

“ 1. It seems to me not *impossible*, that God should know *what is to come*: on the contrary, it is highly reasonable to think that He does and must know things *future*. Whatever happens in the world, which does not come immediately from Him, must either be the effect of *mechanical* causes, or of the motions of living beings and *free* agents. For *chance*, we have seen already, is no cause. Now as to the former, it cannot be *impossible* for Him, upon whom the being and nature of every thing depends, and who therefore must *intimately* know all their powers, and what effects they will have, to see through the whole *train* of causes and effects, and whatever will come to pass in *that way*: nay, it is *impossible* that He should *not* do it. We ourselves, if we are satisfied of the goodness of the materials of which a machine is made, and understand the force and determination of those powers by which it is moved, can tell what it will do, or what will be the effect of it. And as to those things which depend upon the *voluntary* motions of free agents, it is well known, that men (by whom learn how to judge of the rest) can only be free with respect to such things as are within their *sphere*; not great, God knows: and their freedom with respect to

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“ these can only consist in a liberty either to act,  
“ without any incumbent necessity, as their *own*  
“ *reason* and judgment shall determine them ; or to  
“ *neglect* their rational faculties, and not use them at  
“ all, but suffer themselves to be carried away by the  
“ tendencies and inclinations of the body, which left  
“ thus to itself acts in a manner *mechanically*. Now  
“ He, who knows what *is* in men’s power, what not;  
“ knows the make of their bodies, and all the *mecha-*  
“ *nism* and propensions of them; knows the *nature*  
“ and *extent* of their understandings, and what will  
“ determine them this or that way ; knows all the pro-  
“ cess of natural (or second) causes, and consequent-  
“ ly how these may work upon them : He, I say, who  
“ knows all this, may know *what* men will do, if He  
“ can but know this one thing more, *viz.* whether  
“ they *will use* their rational faculties or *not*. And  
“ since even we ourselves, mean and defective as we  
“ are, can *in some measure* conceive, how so much as  
“ this may be done, and seem to want but one step to  
“ finish the account, can we with any show of reason  
“ deny to a *Perfect* Being this one article more, or  
“ think that He cannot do that too ; especially if we  
“ call to mind, that this very power of *using* our own  
“ faculties is held of Him ?

“ *Future*, or what to us is future, may as truly be  
“ the object of Divine knowledge as *present* is of ours :  
“ nor can we tell, what respect *past, present, to come,*  
“ have to the Divine mind, or wherein they differ.  
“ To deaf men there is no such thing as *sound*, to

“ blind no such thing as *light* or *colour* : nor, when  
“ these things are defined and explained to them in  
“ the best manner which their circumstances admit,  
“ are they capable of knowing *how* they are apprehended. So here, we cannot tell *how* future things  
“ are known perhaps, any more than deaf or blind  
“ people what sounds or colours are, and *how* they  
“ are perceived ; but yet there may be a way of knowing *those*, as well as there is of perceiving *these*.  
“ As they want a *fifth* sense to perceive sounds or colours, of which they have no notion : so perhaps  
“ we may want a *sixth* sense, or *some faculty*, of  
“ which future events may be the proper objects. Nor  
“ have we any more reason to deny, that there is in  
“ nature *such* a sense or *faculty*, then the deaf or  
“ blind have to deny there is such a sense as that of  
“ *hearing* or *seeing*.

“ In the last place, this knowledge is not only not  
“ *impossible*, but that which has been already proved  
“ concerning the Deity and His perfection doth necessarily infer that nothing can be hid from Him.  
“ For if *ignorance* be an imperfection, the ignorance  
“ of *future* acts and events must be so : and then if  
“ *all* imperfections are to be denied of Him, *this*  
“ *must*.

“ There is indeed a common prejudice against the  
“ *prescience* (as it is usually called) of God ; which suggests, that if God foreknows things, He foreknows  
“ them infallibly or *certainly* : and if so, then they are  
“ *certain* ; and if certain, then they are no longer matter

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“ of *freedom*. And thus prescience and freedom are  
“ inconsistent. *But sure* the nature of a thing is not  
“ *changed* by being known, or known before-hand.  
“ For if it is known truly, it is known to be what it  
“ is; and therefore is not altered by this. The truth  
“ is, God foresees, or rather sees the actions of free  
“ agents, because they *will be*; not that they will be,  
“ because He *foresees* them.

“ In a word, it involves no *contradiction* to assert,  
“ that God certainly knows what any man will  
“ choose; and therefore that he should do this cannot  
“ be said to be *impossible*.

“ 2. It is not *impossible*, that such *laws* of nature,  
“ and such a *series* of causes and effects may be *ori-*  
“ *ginally* designed, that not only general provisions  
“ may be made for the several species of beings;  
“ but even *particular cases*, at least many of them,  
“ may also be provided for without *innovations* or  
“ *alterations* in the course of nature. It is true this  
“ amounts to a prodigious scheme, in which all things  
“ to come are as it were comprehended under one  
“ view, estimated, and laid together; but when I  
“ consider what a mass of *wonders* the universe is in  
“ other regards; what a Being God is, *incomprehen-*  
“ *sibly* great and perfect; that he cannot be ignorant  
“ of any thing, no, not of the *future* wants and de-  
“ portments of *particular* men; and that all things,  
“ which derive from Him as the First cause, must  
“ do this so as to be *consistent* one with another, and  
“ in such a manner, as to make *one compact* system,

“ befitting so great an Author : I say, when I consider this, I cannot deny such an *adjustment* of things to be within His power. The order of events proceeding from the settlement of nature, may be as compatible with the due and reasonable success of *my* endeavours and prayers (as inconsiderable a part of the world as I am,) as with any thing or *phenomenon* how *great* soever.

“ Perhaps my meaning may be made more intelligible thus. Suppose M (some man) certainly to *foreknow* some way or other that when he should come to be upon his death-bed, L would *petition* for some *particular legacy*, in a manner so earnest and humble, and with such a good disposition, as would render it proper to grant his request : and upon this M makes his *last will*, by which he devises to L that which was to be asked, and then locks up the *will*; and all this many years before the death of M, and whilst L had yet no expectation or thought of any such thing. When the time comes, the *petition* is made, and *granted*; not by making any *new will*, but by the *old* one already made, and without *alteration*: which legacy had, notwithstanding that, never been left had the petition never been preferred. The grant may be called an effect of a future act, and depends as much upon it, as if it had been made after the act. So if it had been foreseen, that L would not *so much as ask*, and had therefore been left out of the will, this *preterition* would have been caused



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“ by his carriage, though much later than the date  
“ of the will. In all this is nothing hard to be ad-  
“ mitted, if M be allowed to *foreknow* the case. And  
“ thus the *prayers*, which good men offer to the  
“ *All-knowing* God, and the *neglects* of others, may  
“ find fitting effects *already* forecasted in the course  
“ of nature. Which *possibility* may be extended  
“ to the labours of men, and their behaviour in  
“ general.

“ 3. It is not *impossible*, that men, whose natures  
“ and actions are foreknown, may be introduced into  
“ the world in such *times*, *places*, and other *circum-*  
“ *stances*, as that their acts and behaviour may not  
“ only coincide with the *general* plan of things, but  
“ also answer many *private* cases too. The *planets*  
“ and bigger parts of the world we cannot but see  
“ are disposed into such *places* and *order*, that they  
“ together make a noble *system*, without having their  
“ natural powers of attraction (or the force of that  
“ which is equivalent to attraction) or any of the laws  
“ of motion, *restrained* or *altered*. On the contrary,  
“ being *rightly placed*, they by the observation of  
“ *these* become subservient to the main design. Now  
“ why may there not be in the Divine mind some-  
“ thing like a projection of the *future history* of man-  
“ kind, as well as of the order, and motions, and  
“ various aspects of the greater bodies of the world?  
“ And then why should it not be thought *possible* for  
“ *men*, as well as for *them*, by some secret law,  
“ though of another kind, or rather by the presidency

“ and guidance of an unseen governing power, to be  
“ brought into their places in such a manner as that  
“ by the *free* use of their faculties, the conjunctions  
“ and oppositions of their interests and inclinations,  
“ the natural influence and weight of their several  
“ magnitudes and degrees of parts, power, wealth,  
“ &c. they may conspire to make out the scheme?  
“ And then again, since generals consist of parti-  
“ culars, and in this scheme are comprehended the  
“ actions and cases of *particular* men, they cannot  
“ be so situated respectively among the rest of their  
“ species as to be serviceable to the principal inten-  
“ tion, and fall properly into the *general diagram* of  
“ affairs, unless they and their several actings and  
“ cases do in the main correspond one to another,  
“ and fit among themselves, or at least are not *in-*  
“ *consistent*.

“ 4. It is not *impossible* (for this is *all* that I con-  
“ tend for here), that many things, suitable to several  
“ cases, may be brought to pass by means of *secret*  
“ and sometimes *sudden influences* on our minds, or  
“ the minds of other men, whose acts may affect us.  
“ For instance, if the case should require, that N  
“ should be delivered from some threatening *ruin*,  
“ or from some *misfortune*, which would certainly  
“ befall him, if he should go such a way at such a  
“ time, as he intended: upon this occasion some *new*  
“ reasons may be presented to his mind, why he  
“ should not go *at all*, or not *then*, or not *by that*  
“ *road*; or he may forget to go. Or, if he is to be

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“ delivered from some dangerous *enemy*, either some  
“ new turn given to his thoughts may divert him  
“ from going where the *enemy* will be, or the enemy  
“ may be after the same manner diverted from coming  
“ where *he* shall be, or his (the enemy's) resentment  
“ may be *qualified*, or some proper method of *defence*  
“ may be suggested, or degree of resolution and  
“ vigour excited. After the same manner, not only  
“ deliverances from dangers and troubles, but ad-  
“ vantages and successes may be conferred: or, on  
“ the other side, men may, by way of punishment  
“ for crimes committed, incur mischiefs and cala-  
“ mities. I say, these things and such like *may be*.  
“ For the operations of the mind following in great  
“ measure the present disposition of the *body*, some  
“ thoughts and designs, or absences of mind, may  
“ proceed from *corporeal* causes, acting according to  
“ the common laws of matter and motion themselves;  
“ and so the case may fall in with n. 2. or they may  
“ be occasioned by something said or done by *other*  
“ *men*; and then the case may be brought under n.  
“ 3. or they may be caused by the suggestion, and  
“ impulse, or other silent communications of some  
“ *spiritual being*; perhaps the Deity himself. For  
“ that such imperceptible influences and still whispers  
“ may be, none of us all can positively deny: that  
“ is, we cannot know certainly, that there are no  
“ such things. On the contrary, I believe there are  
“ but few who have made observations upon them-  
“ selves and their affairs, but must, when they re-

“ flect on life past, and the various adventures and  
“ events in it, find many instances, in which their  
“ usual judgment and sense of things cannot but  
“ seem to themselves to have been *over-ruled* they know  
“ not *by what*, nor *how*, nor *why* (i. e. they have  
“ done things, which afterwards they wonder how  
“ they came *to do*); and that these actions have had  
“ consequences very *remarkable* in their history, I  
“ speak not here of men dementated with wine, or  
“ enchanted with some temptation: the thing holds  
“ true of men even in their sober and more consider-  
“ ing seasons.

“ That there may be *possibly* such inspirations of  
“ new thoughts and counsels may perhaps farther ap-  
“ pear from this; that we so frequently find thoughts  
“ rising in our heads, into which we are led by *no*  
“ discourse, *nothing* we read, *no* clue of reasoning;  
“ but they surprise and come upon us from we *know*  
“ *not* what quarter. If they proceeded from the  
“ mobility of spirits, straggling out of order, and  
“ fortuitous *p*ections of the brain, or were of the  
“ nature of *dreams*, why are they not as wild, inco-  
“ herent, and extravagant as they are? Not to add,  
“ that the world has generally acknowledged, and  
“ therefore seems to have *experienced* some assistance  
“ and directions given to good men by the Deity;  
“ that men have been many times infatuated, and lost  
“ to themselves, &c. If any one should object, that  
“ if men are thus over-ruled in their actings, then  
“ they are deprived of their *liberty*, &c.; the answer

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“ is, that though man is a free agent, he may not be  
“ free as to *every thing*. His freedom may be re-  
“ strained, and he only accountable for those acts in  
“ respect of which he *is free*.

“ 5. There *possibly* may be, and most probably  
“ are, beings *invisible*, and *superior* in nature to us,  
“ who may by *other* means be in many respects *mi-*  
“ *nisters* of God’s providence, and authors under  
“ Him of many events to particular men, without  
“ *altering* the laws of nature. For it implies no  
“ *contradiction* or *absurdity* to say there are such  
“ beings: on the contrary, we have the greatest  
“ reason to think what has been intimated already;  
“ that such imperfect beings as we are, are far be-  
“ low the *top* of the scale. Though *pictures* of spi-  
“ ritual beings cannot be drawn in our imagination,  
“ as of corporeal; yet to the upper and reasoning  
“ part of the mind the idea of *spiritual substance* may  
“ perhaps be as clear as that of *corporeity*. For what  
“ *penetrability* is, must be known just as well as what  
“ *impenetrability* is: and so on.

“ And since it has been proved that all corporeal  
“ motions proceed originally from something *incor-*  
“ *poreal*, it must be as certain, that there are incor-  
“ poreous substances, as that there is motion. Beside,  
“ how can we tell but that there may be above us  
“ beings of greater powers and more perfect intel-  
“ lects, and capable of mighty things, which yet  
“ may have *corporeal* vehicles as we have, but *finer*  
“ and *invisible*? Nay, who knows but that there

“ may be even of these many *orders*, rising in dignity  
“ of nature, and amplitude of power, one above ano-  
“ ther? It is no way below the *philosophy* of these  
“ times, which seems to delight in enlarging the ca-  
“ pacities of matter, to assert the *possibility* of this.  
“ But however, my own defects sufficiently convince  
“ me, that I have no pretension to be one of the *first*  
“ rank, or that which is *next under* the All-perfect.

“ Now then, as *we ourselves* by the use of our  
“ powers do many times interpose and alter the course  
“ of things within our sphere, from what it would be  
“ if they were left entirely to the laws of motion and  
“ gravitation, without being said to alter those *laws* ;  
“ so may these *superior* beings likewise in respect of  
“ things within their spheres, much larger be sure,  
“ the least of them all, than ours is: only with this  
“ difference, that as their knowledge is more exten-  
“ sive, their intellects purer, their reason better, they  
“ may be much *properer* instruments of Divine provi-  
“ dence with respect to *us*, than we can be with re-  
“ spect *one to another*, or to the *animals* below us.  
“ I cannot think indeed, that the power of these  
“ beings is so large, as to alter or suspend the *general*  
“ *laws* of the world; or that the world is like a bun-  
“ gling piece of clock-work, which requires to be oft  
“ set backward or forward by them: or that they  
“ can at pleasure change their condition to ape us,  
“ or inferior beings; and consequently am not apt  
“ hastily to credit stories of *portents*, &c. such as  
“ cannot be true, unless the natures of things and

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“ their manner of being be quite renversed : yet (I  
“ will repeat it again) as men may be so placed as to  
“ become, even by the free exercise of their own  
“ powers, *instruments* of God’s particular providence  
“ to other men (or animals) ; so may we well suppose,  
“ that these *higher* beings may be so *distributed* through  
“ the universe, and subject to such an economy (though  
“ I pretend not to tell what that is), as may render  
“ *them also* instruments of the same providence ; and  
“ that they may, in proportion to their greater abilities,  
“ be capable, *consistently with the laws of nature*,  
“ some way or other, though not in *our* way, of influencing  
“ human affairs in proper places.

“ *Lastly*, what I have ventured to lay before you  
“ I would not have to be so understood, as if I peremptorily *asserted* things to be just in this manner,  
“ or pretended to *impose* my thoughts upon any body  
“ else : my design is only to show, how I *endeavour*  
“ to help my own narrow conceptions. There must  
“ be *other ways* above my understanding, by which  
“ such a Being as God is may take care of *private*  
“ cases without interrupting the order of the universe,  
“ or putting any of the parts of it out of their channels. We may be sure he regards every thing *as*  
“ *being what it is* ; and that therefore his *laws* must  
“ be accommodated to the true geniuses and capacities  
“ of those things which are affected by them. The  
“ *purely material* part of the world is governed by  
“ such, as are suited to the state of a being, which  
“ is *insensible, passive only*, and every where and



“ always *the same* : and these seem to be simple and  
“ few, and to carry natural agents into one constant  
“ road. But *intelligent, active, free* beings must be  
“ under a government of another form. They must,  
“ truth requiring it, be considered *as beings*, who  
“ may behave themselves as they ought or not ; *as*  
“ *beings* susceptible of pleasure and pain ; *as beings*  
“ who not only owe to God all that they are or have,  
“ but are (or may be) sensible of this, and to whom  
“ therefore it must be *natural* upon many occasions  
“ to supplicate Him for mercy, defence, direction,  
“ assistance ; lastly, *as beings*, whose cases admit great  
“ variety ; and therefore that *influence*, by which he  
“ is present to them, must be different from that,  
“ by which gravitation and common *phenomena* are  
“ produced in matter. This seems to be as it were  
“ a public influence, the other private, answering  
“ private cases and prayers ; this to operate directly  
“ upon the body, the other more especially upon the  
“ mind, and upon the body by it, &c. But I for-  
“ bear, lest I should go too far out of my depth :  
“ only adding in general, that God cannot put things  
“ so far out of his own power ; as that he should not  
“ *for ever govern* transactions and events in his own  
“ world ; nor can *perfect* knowledge and power ever  
“ want *proper* means to achieve what is fit to be done.  
“ So that, though what I have advanced should stand  
“ for nothing, there *may* still be a *particular provi-*  
“ *dence*, notwithstanding the forementioned difficulty.  
“ And then, if there *may be* one, it will unavoidably

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“ follow, that there *is* one; because in the description  
“ of providence nothing is supposed with respect to  
“ *particular cases*, but that they should be provided  
“ for in such a manner as will at last *agree best with*  
“ *reason*; and to allow that this may be done, and  
“ yet say that it is not done, implies a blasphemy  
“ that creates horror: it is to charge the *Perfect*  
“ Being with one of the greatest *imperfections*, and  
“ to make Him not so much as a *reasonable* being.

“ I conclude, then, that it is as certain that there  
“ is a *particular providence*, as that God is a Being  
“ of *perfect reason*. For if men are treated accord-  
“ ing to reason, they must be treated according to  
“ what they are: the virtuous, the just, the com-  
“ passionate, &c. *as such*, and the vicious, unjust,  
“ cruel, &c. according to *what they are*: and their  
“ several cases must be taken and considered as *they*  
“ *are*: which cannot be done without *such* a provi-  
“ dence.”

I make no apology for the length of this quotation. The subject is so important, and has notwithstanding been so much misunderstood and misrepresented, that every ingenious attempt to illustrate it deserves attention; and the view of it taken by Mr. Wollaston is so clear, philosophical, and satisfactory, that no man who is free from prejudice can read it without benefit, nor, I conceive, without complete conviction.

Before I entirely quit this subject, allow me to remind you, that we have not been contemplating a mere speculation, but have been pursuing a train of reasoning which is ractical and highly moral in

its tendency. Let the notion once fully occupy the mind of a vicious man, that God is too exalted or too remote from us to watch the progress of individual guilt, to notice and record its propensities, to counteract its designs,—and with what ardour will he run the career of iniquity? While, on the other hand, the conviction that “all things are naked and open” to the piercing eye of God,—that when transgressors say, “surely the darkness shall cover us,” behold “even the night shall be light about them,” “the darkness and the light being both alike to God,” (g) —that no being is too insignificant or too obscure to escape the notice of God,—that none can hide himself in gloom so thick as to be impenetrable to the glance of omniscience,—tends to appal the guilty, and check the luxuriant growth of crimes. And, in a world of trial, sin, and difficulty, what can be so consoling to the good as the firm persuasion that God is the God of individuals, and the “*Father* of the faithful,” the “refuge and strength” of all who trust in him; that He hears the cry of the suppliant, and, wherever it is needed and duly estimated, “giveth power to the faint;”—that he, who when he promises will perform, has declared that “they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: that they shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint!” (h)

(g) Psalm cxxxix. 11, 12.

(h) Is. xl. 29, 31. An objecting correspondent has called upon ~~me~~ to reconcile the doctrine of Providence with the existence of

moral evil. I entreat his attention to the following often quoted passage from Simplicius, a pagan writer before mentioned in this letter. Simplicius asks, "Whether God may be called the author of sin, because he permits the soul to use her liberty?" and answers the question thus:

"He who says that God should not permit the exercise of its freedom to the soul, must affirm one of these two things; either that the soul, though by nature capable of indifferently choosing good or evil, should yet be constantly prevented from choosing evil; or else that it should have been made of such a nature as to have no power of choosing evil.

"The former assertion (continues he) is irrational and absurd; for what kind of liberty would that be, in which there should be no freedom of choice? and what choice could there be, if the mind were constantly restrained to one side of every alternative? With respect to the second assertion, it is to be observed (says he) that no evil is in itself desirable, or can be chosen as evil. But if this power of determining itself either way in any given case must be taken from the soul, it must either be as something not good, or as some great evil. But whoever saith so, does not consider how many things there are which, though accounted good and desirable, are yet never put in competition with this freedom of will: for without it we should be on a level with the brutes; and there is no person who would rather be a brute than a man, If God then shows his goodness in giving to inferior beings such perfections as are far below this, is it incongruous to the Divine nature and goodness to give man a self-determining power over his actions, and to permit him the free exercise of that power? Had God, to prevent man's sin, taken away the liberty of his will, he would likewise have destroyed the foundation of all virtue, and the very nature of man; for there could be no virtue were there not a possibility of vice; and man's nature, had it continued rational, would have been Divine, because impeccable. Therefore (continues he), though we attribute to God, as its author this self-determining power, which is so necessary in the order of the universe; we have no reason to attribute to him that evil which comes by the abuse of liberty: for God doth not cause that aver-

" sion from good which is in the soul when it sins; he only gave to  
" the soul such a power as might turn itself to evil, out of which  
" he produces much good, which, without such a power, could  
" not have been produced by Omnipotence itself."

Those who wish to go farther into this inquiry than the above observations of Simplicius will lead them, may turn to a very masterly " Essay on the Permission of Evil," in the second volume of the " Works" of Dr. Hamilton, late Bishop of Ossory.

## LETTER XX.

*On the Resurrection of the Body.*

IF a being, which was constituted by the union of two substances essentially different, were appointed to continue, it must continue a *mixed* being, or it would be no longer the *same* being; so that if man is to exist in a future state, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is a necessary consequence of his nature: those who admit the immortality of the soul, and deny the resurrection of the body, therefore forget the *man*, and, in effect, deprive him of existence beyond the grave. Still, it has been thought, by many persons in all ages, “a thing incredible that God “ should raise the dead;” (*i*) and the contrary is nowhere positively asserted, but in the Scriptures received by Christians, or in writings founded upon them. There are many passages in the Old Testament which either obscurely hint at the resurrection, or immediately refer to it; (*k*) yet they are by no means such as produced a firm belief in the doctrine among the Jews. The *Sadducees*, for example, “say “ that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor

(*i*) Acts, xxvi. 8.

(*k*) Such as Job, xix. 23—27. Dan. xii. 2. Is, xxv. 8, xxvi. 19. Hos. vi. 2, xiii. 14, Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14.

“spirit; but the Pharisees allow both.” (l) And even among our Lord’s disciples, though some of them, like Lazarus’s sister Martha, believed that the dead would “rise again in the resurrection at the “last day,” (m) others doubted and “wondered “what *rising from the dead* could mean.” (n) When Paul preached to the philosophers at Athens, and declared to them the resurrection of Jesus, they were astonished at the novelty and singularity of his doctrine, and “said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of “strange gods, because he preached unto them *Jesus* “and the *Resurrection* :” (o) these *philosophers* were so deplorably ignorant as, when the apostle used the words *Ιησους* and *Αναστασις*, to fancy that he was labouring to introduce a new god and goddess amongst them ! When he urged the matter still farther, “they “scoffed :” and on another occasion, when he was pleading before Agrippa and Festus, the latter interrupted him the moment he adverted to the resurrection of Jesus, exclaiming, “Paul, thou art mad, “much learning driveth thee to madness.” (p) Conformably with the conduct of most other heathens, Pliny classes it amongst impossible things which God cannot accomplish,—*Revocare defunctos*, ‘to call back ‘the dead to life.’ And Celsus calls the hope of the resurrection, ‘the hope of worms, a very filthy and ‘abominable as well as impossible thing: it is that

(l) Matt. xxii. 23. Acts, xxiii. 8.

(m) John, xi. 24.

(n) Mark, ix. 10.

(o) Acts, xvii. 18.

(p) Acts, xxvi. 24.



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‘ which God neither can nor will do, being base and  
‘ contrary to nature.’ (q)

This doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead is, however, as I have already intimated, one of the great articles of the Christian faith. We believe that Jesus died and rose again; (r) we also believe, for so we are taught in the New Testament, that “ them “ which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,” that “ Christ by his rising became the first fruits of “ them that slept,” that “ the dead shall be raised “ incorruptible,” that “ the grave and the sea shall “ give up their dead,” that, at this resurrection, “ the dead in Christ shall rise first,” the Lord Jesus Christ will change “ our vile body, and fashion “ it like unto his glorious body, according to the “ working of that mighty power whereby he is able “ to subdue all things to himself.” (s)

Clearly as this doctrine is revealed, in the above quoted and several other places of Scripture, it is notwithstanding *doubted* by many professing Christians. And it has been usually *denied* by infidels, and selected by them as one of the most vulnerable points in the system of Christianity. Yet, taking Deists upon their

(q) Orig. cont. Cels. lib. v. This, of course, is refuted by Origen; and others of the Ante-nicene fathers, especially Justin Martyr and Tertullian in their Apologies, most ingeniously defend the doctrine of the church as to this point. See also Clemens Romanus’s 1st epistle.

(r) See Letter viii. vol. i.

(s) 1 Thess. iv. 14. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 52. Rev. xx. 13. Phil. iii. 21.

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own ground, I conceive the reasonableness, if not the necessity, of the resurrection may be established: while, to those who allow the authenticity and correctness of the New Testament history, the matter will be placed beyond the reach of dispute.

In the estimation of Deists God is a wise and just governor of the world: such a governor must reward the good and punish the wicked: but, in the present state, we often see good men under suffering, bad men following and enjoying pleasure, through the greater part of life: the character of the governor, therefore, requires that there should be a future state in which this great anomaly shall be adjusted; and, of course, a state of existence not for the body alone, nor for the soul alone, but for the *man* in his mixed nature, constituted of soul and body. It is the man, and not a *part* of him merely, which this simple train of reasoning requires us to expect shall be rewarded or punished. (t) Nor can the conclusion be fairly resisted, unless it can be shown that the resurrection of the body is *impossible*: and that it is *not* impossible may be safely inferred from history, and the analogy of nature, in the following manner.

(t) I am aware it may be said, and indeed it has often been said, that since consciousness and feeling exist in the soul, the future existence of the *soul* is all that can fairly be inferred from this argument. But we have at least as good reasons for affirming as any can have for denying, that in all probability the capacity of the soul for feeling the highest degrees of pleasure or pain, depends upon its union with an organized body.

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From history we learn not merely that the body of Lazarus was reanimated after he had been interred four days, and that of Jesus Christ after it had lain in the grave part of three days: but farther that “*after* His resurrection *many* bodies of the saints “which slept arose from their graves,” which had been thrown open by the earthquake at his crucifixion, “and *went unto the holy city, and appeared unto “many;*” (v) thus attesting the truth of his resurrection, and declaring their own rescue from the grave (in which some of them had *long* lain), by virtue of his power over death and corruption. So that to deny the possibility of the resurrection is to deny the truth of several matters of fact, all at least as well attested as any other facts in history; and that in contradiction to some very obvious modes of reasoning, and some striking analogies.

For, in the first place, the restoring to life a body deprived of motion, animation, and sensation, is not beyond the power of God: since the communication of any qualities to an organized body, or body capable of organization, which it had lost, cannot be imagined to require a greater exertion of power than the original creation of such body with certain appropriate attributes. Indeed, cases occur almost daily in which human efforts lead to a change to all appearance (and it should be remembered that we know little of death, except in regard to its mere appearances) as great as

(v) Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

the deliverance of a dead man from the silence and inactivity of the grave. I allude to fainting-fits, and instances of suspended animation by drowning. In these the subject is often for a considerable time so completely void of motion, feeling, and, as it would seem, of life, that no one, who had never previously witnessed or heard of a similar suspension, could avoid concluding that it would be final and eternal. There is, it is true, a difference in the durations of lifelessness in the cases of swooning and apparent drowning, and of real death; but that is more than compensated in the difference of power and skill in the respective agents of restoration.

Nearly allied to these are the examples of peculiar transformations undergone by various insects, and the state of rest and insensibility which precede those transformations: such as the chrysalis or aurelia state of butterflies, moths, and silk-worms. The *Myrmeleon formicaleo*, of whose larva and its extraordinary history Reaumur and Roësel have given accurate descriptions, continues in its insensible or chrysalis state about four weeks. The *Libellula* or Dragon-fly continues still longer in its state of inaction. Naturalists tell us that the worm repairs to the margin of its pond in quest of a convenient place of abode during its insensible state. It attaches itself to a plant or piece of dry wood; and the skin, which gradually becomes parched and brittle, at last splits opposite to the upper part of the thorax. Through this aperture the insect, now become winged, quickly pushes its way, and being thus extri-

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cated from confinement begins to expand its wings, to flutter, and finally to launch into the air with that gracefulness and ease which are peculiar to this majestic tribe. Now who, that saw for the first time the little pendant coffin in which the inanimate insect lay entombed, and was ignorant of the transformations of which we are now speaking, would ever predict that in a few weeks, perhaps a few days or hours, it would become one of the most elegant and active of *winged* insects? And who, that contemplates with the mind of a philosopher this curious transformation, and who knows that two years before the insect mounts into air, even while it is living in water, it has the rudiments of *wings*, can deny that the body of a dead man may at some future period be again invested with vigour and activity, and soar to regions for which some latent organization may peculiarly fit it?

But I may be reminded, that the analogy, to which I have been calling your attention, is not complete, in so much as dead bodies sink from their organized state into corruption, while chrysales are merely inactive or at most insensible. Let us then advance *this* step, and we shall find a parallel case in the process of vegetation. “That which thou sowest (says the apostle to the Corinthians) is not *quicken*ed “except it die.” (*w*) Seed may be sown, but unless it lose its external configuration, and appear *corrupted*, no future vegetable will spring from it. The little

(w) 1 Cor. xv. 37.

infinitesimal or germen, which is to spring forth into new life, is fed by the death and corruption of the rest: a fact well known not only to scientific botanists, but to almost every gardener and husbandman you can consult. So that those, who deny the propriety and correctness of the analogy traced by the apostle, are as little supported by truth and nature as the Corinthian freethinkers, whose objection he thus philosophically refuted. The apparent corruption which a grain when deposited in the earth undergoes, may be considered as the casting of *exuviae*, whose removal and decay are necessary to the dawnings of latent life: and thus, in like manner, may the future body be ripening through the mysterious process of dissolution, till the day of the general resurrection, when it shall come forth a glorious body, fitted for new union with the soul from which it had been separated, and so formed as thenceforward to endure for ever. The principal difference in the two cases relates to frequency of occurrence: the process of vegetation from a corrupted grain is observed annually; while the deliverance of a body from corruption in the grave will occur but once. Yet this ought rather to stimulate our hopes than to generate scepticism: the contrast between the sterility and death-like appearance of the vegetable world in the winter, and the gladsome verdure, vigour, and variety of spring, when God “renews the face of the earth,” (x) and enlivens us

(x) Psalm civ. 30.



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with balmy air and cheerful skies; is admirably fitted to teach us what the Creator and Governor of the universe *can* effect; to convince us that he can “loosen “the bands of death” as easily as he can educe vegetation from corruption; and, in conjunction with the promises of the Gospel, to excite a lively and rapturous anticipation of that delightful period, when “*one unbounded spring*” shall “*encircle all.*”

Objectors, however, have advanced still farther, and urge that after death the body may not merely become insensible, inactive, and undergo corruption; but may experience dispersion of particles and union with other bodies. Thus the body of a dead man may be burnt (as were those of some primitive martyrs by their enemies, in derision of the resurrection), its ashes, be scattered in the air, blown about by the wind, or exhaled into the atmosphere: or, after it is resolved into earthy or humid matter, it may be taken up by the vessels which supply plants with nutriment, and at length become constituent parts of the substance of those plants. How can particles thus dispersed half over the earth, or thus intimately combined with other bodies, be recalled from their state of dispersion, or separated from the bodies of which they have subsequently formed constituent parts, and re-united so as to form one body? Here again, we may deprive the objection of all force, by contemplating processes of daily occurrence. Chemists can intermix several liquids, of essentially different kinds, in such manner, that the smallest sensible particle of the resulting



liquid shall partake of all the constituent liquids ; and then they can by analysis separate this compound substance into all the simple liquids of which it was composed. They can detect, separate, and measure, the several simple substances, of which a certain compound natural mass shall be formed.—They can, for example, detect and measure the chromic acid, oxyd of iron, alumina, and silica, in a given mass of that natural substance *chromium ferri* ; the respective quantities of acidulous water, thick brown oil, thin empyreumatic oil, charcoal, and gases, in any proposed portion of *guaiacum* ; or the relative masses and relative weights of the azotic gas, oxygenous gas, aqueous vapour, and carbonic acid gas, in any given volume of *atmospheric air* : and all this, be it recollected, by means within the compass of *human agents*. Does the collecting together of the scattered particles of dead bodies, or the separation of them from other bodies with which they may have become combined, require skill or energy so much greater than the operations of art to which I have just been adverting, that we must pronounce them too difficult for the Creator of the world to perform ? Is his knowledge so circumscribed that he cannot tell what becomes of every particle of every body He has created ? Or cannot matchless knowledge, and unlimited power, know and accomplish *all* things, required by infinite wisdom or promised by boundless love, as easily and successfully as a chemist can ascertain or separate the various substances in a compound mass ?

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There still remains one other objection, to which we must reply before we get to “the height of this great argument;” and that may be stated in the following terms: ‘Of men drowned in the sea, the bodies may be eaten by fishes, and they again by other men; or, among cannibals, men feast upon the flesh of men: in such cases, where one man’s body may be converted into part of the substance of another man’s body, and so on, how shall each at the resurrection recover his own peculiar body?’ To this I beg to quote the answer of Archbishop Tillotson, who first premises these two observations.

“1. That the body of man is not a constant and permanent thing, always continuing in the same state, and consisting of the same matter; but a successive thing, which is continually spending, and continually renewing itself, every day losing something of the matter which it had before, and gaining new, so that most men have new bodies as they have new clothes; only with this difference, that we change our clothes commonly at once, but our bodies by degrees.

“And this is undeniably certain from experience. For so much as our bodies grow, so much new matter is added to them, over and besides the repairing of what is continually spent; and after a man be come to his full growth, so much of his food as every day turns into nourishment, so much of his yesterday’s body is usually wasted, and carried off by insensible perspiration, that is,

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“ breathed out at the pores of his body, which, accord-  
 “ ing to the static experiment of *Sanctorius*, a learned  
 “ physician, who for several years together weighed  
 “ himself exactly every day, is (as I remember) accord-  
 “ ing to the proportion of five to eight (*y*) of all that  
 “ a man eats and drinks. Now, according to this  
 “ proportion, a man must change his body several  
 “ times in a year.

“ It is true indeed, the more solid parts of the  
 “ body, as the bones, do not change so often as the  
 “ fluid and fleshy; but that they also do change is cer-  
 “ tain, because they *grow*; and whatever grows is  
 “ nourished and spends, because otherwise it would  
 “ not need to be repaired.

“ 2. The body which a man hath at any time of  
 “ his life is as much his own body, as that which he  
 “ hath at his death; so that if the very matter of his  
 “ body, which a man had at any time of his life, be  
 “ raised, it is as much his own and the same body,  
 “ as that which he had at his death, and commonly  
 “ much more perfect; because they who die of linger-  
 “ ing sickness, or old age, are usually mere skeletons  
 “ when they die; so that there is no reason to sup-

(*y*) Later physiologists have shown that *Sanctorius* ascribed to the excretory function of the skin somewhat too great an influence. In temperate climates, however, the weight of matter taken daily from a human body by insensible perspiration is usually between 2 and 4 lbs. instead of 5, as *Sanctorius* supposed; so that a man will change his body several times in the course of his life, though not several times in a year, as the archbishop, assuming the accuracy of *Sanctorius*'s observations, inferred.

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“ pose (or, at least, not to insist) that the very matter  
“ of which our bodies consist at the time of our death,  
“ shall be that which shall be raised, that being  
“ commonly the worst and most imperfect body of all  
“ the rest.

“ These two things being premised, the answer to  
“ this objection cannot be difficult. For as to the  
“ more solid and firm parts of the body, as the skull  
“ and bones, it is not, I think, pretended that the  
“ cannibals eat them; and if they did, so much of the  
“ matter, even of these solid parts, wastes away in a  
“ few years, as, being collected together, would supply  
“ them many times over. And as for the fleshy and  
“ fluid parts, these are so very often changed and  
“ renewed, that we can allow the cannibals to eat  
“ them all up, and to turn them all into nourishment;  
“ and yet no man need contend for want of a body  
“ of his own at the resurrection, viz. any of those  
“ bodies which he had ten or twenty years before,  
“ which are every whit as good, and as much his own,  
“ as that which was eaten.” (z)

Thus far I have been led by a desire to convince

(z) Tillotson's 194th Sermon. The archbishop is here of an opinion diametrically opposite to that of Bishop Stillingfleet, as to the resurrection of *every* particle of the body buried. He has Mr. Locke, however, on his side. For a summary view of the controversy between Stillingfleet and Locke, and an attempt at compromising their dispute, you may consult the 8th of Dr. Watts's Philosophical Essays.

See also Dr. Clarke's remarks on this interesting inquiry, as quoted in Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, vol. iv. p. 235—237.

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you that the resurrection of the body is not impossible, and therefore that it ought not to be ridiculed or denied, even though the belief of it had not been authoritatively proposed to us in Scripture. You will expect me to offer you a few thoughts relative to the kind of body that will be raised; but on this topic I shall be brief, as I have no wish to carry you far into the regions of conjecture.

We are assured by the great Head of the church, that “the hour is coming in which all that are in  
 “their graves shall hear his voice and come forth;  
 “*they that have done good unto the resurrection of*  
 “*life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrec-*  
 “*tion of damnation.*” At that great and solemn event, when we shall “all be changed in a moment,  
 “in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump,” “the  
 “dead shall be raised *incorruptible*,” and it is probable that the bodies of the righteous and the wicked, though each shall in some respects *be the same* as before, will each be in some respects *not the same*, each undergoing some change conformable to the character of the individual, and suited to his future state of existence; but both, as the passage just quoted clearly teaches, are then rendered *indestructible*. Respecting the *good*, it is said, “When Christ, who is our life,  
 “shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory,”  
 “we shall be *like him*, our body shall be fashioned  
 “like his glorious body;” (a) yet, notwithstanding

(a) Col. iv, 4. 1 John, iii, 2. Phil. iii, 21.

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this, " it doth not yet fully appear what we shall be;" and that for a very obvious reason. Our present manner of knowing depends upon our present constitution, and we know not the exact relation which subsists between this constitution and the manner of being in a future world; we derive our ideas through the medium of the senses; the senses are necessarily conversant with terrestrial objects only: our language is suited to the communication of present ideas; and thus it follows that the objects of the future world may in *some* respects (whether few or many we cannot say) differ so extremely from terrestrial objects, that language cannot communicate to us any such ideas as would render those matters comprehensible. But language may suggest striking and pleasing analogies; and with such we are presented by the philosophic apostle. " All flesh (says he) is not the same flesh: " but there is one flesh of men, another of beasts, " another of fishes, and another of birds;" and yet all these are fashioned out of the same kind of substance, mere inert matter, till God gives it life and activity. " There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: " but the glory of the celestial is one, and that of " the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the " sun, and another glory of the moon, and another " glory of the stars: for one star differeth from " another star in glory. So also is the resurrection " of the dead. It is sown in *corruption*, it is raised in " *incorruption*: it is sown in *dishonour*, it is raised in " *glory*: it is sown in *weakness*, it is raised in *power*:



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“ it is sown an *animal* body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), it is raised  
 “ a *spiritual* body.” (b)—It is sown an *animal* body,  
 a body which previously existed with all the organs,  
 faculties, and propensities, requisite to procure, re-  
 ceive, and appropriate nutriment, as well as to per-  
 petuate the species: but it shall be raised a spiritual  
 body, refined from the *dregs* of matter, utterly  
 impermeable by every thing which communicates  
 “ pain,” (c) freed from the organs and senses required  
 only in its former state, and probably possessing the  
 remaining senses in greater perfection, together with  
 new and more exquisite faculties, fitted for the ex-  
 alted state of existence and enjoyment to which it is  
 now rising. In the present state the organs and senses  
 appointed to transmit the impressions of objects to  
 the mind have a manifest relation to the respective  
 objects: the eye and seeing, for example, to light;  
 the ear and hearing, to sound. In the refined and  
 glorious state of existence to which good men are  
 tending, where the objects which solicit attention will  
 be infinitely more numerous, interesting, and delight-  
 ful, may not the new organs, faculties, and senses, be  
 proportionally refined, acute, susceptible, or penetrat-  
 ing? Human industry and invention have placed us,  
 in a manner, in new worlds; what, then, may not a

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 39—44.

(c) “ Neither shall there be any more *pain*.” Rev. xxi. 4. The Greek word, πόνος, here translated pain, comprehends toil, fatigue, and excessive labour of body, as well as vexation and anguish of spirit.



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spiritual body, with sharpened faculties, and the grandest possible objects of contemplation, effect in the celestial regions to which Christians are invited? What delight would Archimedes have experienced, could he by the aid of a microscope have seen the fluids moving through the vessels of some of our minutest insects;—or viewed with a telescope the belts of Jupiter, or the ring of Saturn? And how would that sink into insipidity when compared with the rapture, with which a being, possessing a spiritual body, having its former senses perfected, and new ones communicated, shall explore all the glories and wonders which will be exhibited to it when it shall be admitted into heaven, and *enabled* to see God?

Here, clogged with animal bodies, and borne down to the earth by *gravity* as well as our propensities, we are soon tired of bodily exertion, our mental attention flags, and our affections, “cleaving to the dust,” may impede the operations of both body and mind: but there,—where the body will be liberated from the influence of gravitation (the causes of gravity being removed), motion may be free and without fatigue, the body may obey with astonishing facility the volitions of the soul, and transmit itself from place to place with the utmost celerity,—there the senses will no longer degrade the affections, the imagination no longer corrupt the heart,—the magnificent scenery thrown open to *new* will animate the attention, give a glow and vigour to the sentiments; that roused attention will never tire, those glowing

sentiments will never cloy: but the man now constituted of an indestructible body as well as of an immortal soul, may visit in eternal succession “ the streets “ of the celestial city,” may “ drink of the pure river “ of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of “ the throne of God, and of the Lamb;” and dwell for ever in those abodes of harmony and peace, which, though “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has “ it entered into the imagination of man to conceive,” we are assured “ *God hath prepared for them that love “ Him !* ” (d)

But I leave you to pursue and improve this train of delectable reflection; and am

Truly yours.

(d) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

## LETTER XXI.

*On Eternal Existence after Death.*

IT is one of the grand peculiarities, and (as I doubt not you will find it, on consideration) one of the great excellencies of the New Testament, that it exhibits both promises and threatenings of *eternal* existence after natural death. These are presented to the contemplation of mankind under the character of *reward* and *punishment*, which are correlatives: the existence of one implies the existence of the other: the belief of the latter is as necessary as the belief of the former; for, without it, the belief of a future state will have little if any influence on the bulk of mankind.

This is not a narrow notion confined to the minds of theologians of a rigid stamp: it is the sentiment of several acute philosophers, and wise politicians; of some indeed who have neither been condemned nor contemned for an undue attachment to what are fashionably termed religious *dogmas*. *Montesquieu*, for instance affirms, "that the idea of a place of future rewards necessarily imports that of a place or state of future punishments; and that when the people hope for the one without fearing the other, civil laws have no force." (e) Lord *Bolingbroke* also observes, that "the doctrine of rewards and punish-

(e) *Spirit of Laws*, vol. ii. book 24. ch. 14.

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“ments in a future state has so great a tendency to  
 “enforce the civil laws, and to restrain the vices of  
 “men, that reason which (as he pretends) cannot de-  
 “cide for it on principles of natural theology, will  
 “not decide *against* it on principles of good  
 “policy.” (f) And even Mr. *Hume*, when speaking  
 of the notions that “the Deity will inflict punishments  
 “on vice, and confer infinite rewards on virtue,”  
 says, “those who attempt to disabuse persons of such  
 “prejudices, may, for aught he knows, be good  
 “reasoners; but that he *cannot* allow them to be *good*  
 “citizens and politicians, since they free men from  
 “one restraint upon their passions, and make the in-  
 “fringement of the laws of equity and society, in one  
 “respect, more easy and secure.” (g)

The ancient philosophers had some feeble glimmerings of a future state; but, as you have long ago learned, (h) they were sadly clouded by error and absurdity; and the awful idea of accountability was in great measure, if not entirely, excluded. This is not to be wondered at, since their notions of the Supreme Being were so erroneous. The belief of a God, and that of a future state are indissoluble: no consistent Theist *can* believe that human existence ceases at death; nor, on the other hand, can any one who believes in a future world be an Atheist. Our ideas of these subjects, however, must have been very vague inde-

(f) Bolingbroke's Works, 4to edit. vol. v. p. 322.

(g) Hume's Philosophical Essays. 1st Ed. p. 231.

(h) Vol. i. Letter iii.

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pendent of Revelation: but "God hath brought  
"life and immortality *to light*, through the *Gospel*." Christians are taught that man has two states of existence, the one temporal, the other eternal: ineffable, interminable bliss, is promised to those who are "faithful unto death;" while "indignation and "wrath, tribulation and anguish" are represented as the eternal doom of "every soul of man that doeth "evil," and repenteth not. The Scriptures also suggest to us a remarkable and essential distinction, not only in regard to the duration, but to the nature, of the states before and after death. Here the capacity of enjoyment and that of suffering appear to have nearly an invariable ratio: those who have the richest sources of delight seem to have most avenues of pain; every new road to knowledge gives them a fresh insight into their ignorance; and every refinement upon pleasure renders them more alive to distress: while those who are blunted against the finer feelings seem in an equal degree hardened against the pressure of evil; so that though they may enjoy less, they likewise suffer less: and the happiness of this life is, probably, much more uniformly diffused (the stings of conscience not considered) than cursory observers might suppose. But this balancing of bliss and woe will not be found beyond the grave. In the future world the capability of enjoyment will, to the blessed, be perpetually expanding, while that of suffering will be entirely destroyed: and, on the other hand, with those who are consigned to endless punishment, the capacity of

suffering will, there is reason to fear, continually increase, while that of enjoyment will be blunted and annihilated;—for “the wrath of God *abideth* on “them.” They are considerations like these, that give such unbounded importance to the concerns of the soul, and make us exclaim to those who regard them with supineness,—

“O! be wise!

“Nor make a curse of *immortality*.

“Know’st thou th’ importance of a soul immortal?

“Behold this midnight glory; worlds on worlds!

“Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze;

“Ten thousand add; add twice ten thousand more;

“Then weigh the whole; *ONE soul* outweighs them all;

“And calls th’ astonishing magnificence

“Of *unintelligent* creation poor.”

YOUNG.

Allow me to place before you a few of the passages of Scripture, in which the nature and duration of the future state of existence are expressly declared. And first I shall quote part of the language of our Lord in his awful description of the solemnities of the judgment day. “Then the King will say to them on his “right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit “the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation “of the world.” “Then shall he say also to them “on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” “And *these shall go away into everlasting “punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*” (i) In one of his prayers to his heavenly Father, the lan-

(i) Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

guage of the Messiah was, "Father, I desire that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory." (k) In his celebrated sermon on the mount, his language was, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." (l) And in the Revelation we have the promise, "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit upon my throne, even as I also overcame and sit with my Father on his throne." (m) Hence, in other parts of the same inspired book it is said, "They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne will dwell among them. They will hunger no more, nor will they thirst any more; nor will the sun strike on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne will feed them, and will lead them to living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor lamentation, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (n) Well may language labour to describe felicity such as this: even hyperbole upon hyperbole would here be defective, as is indicated by the apostle Paul when he calls it "*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" (o) Let us now contemplate

(k) John, xvii. 24.

(l) Matt. v. 8.

(m) Rev. iii. 21.

(n) Rev. vii. 15—17. xxi. 4.

(o) 2 Cor. iv. 17, where the καὶ ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν is infinitely emphatical, as Blackwall justly remarks.



the other side of the picture. "If thine hand  
 " cause thee to offend, cut it off: it is better for thee  
 " to enter maimed into life, than, having two hands,  
 " to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire; *where*  
 " *their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*  
 " And if thy foot cause thee to offend, cut it off: it is  
 " better for thee to enter into life lame, than, having  
 " two feet, to be cast into hell, into the unquench-  
 " able fire; *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is*  
 " *not quenched.* And if thine eye cause thee to offend,  
 " pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the  
 " kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two  
 " eyes, to be cast into hell fire; *where their worm*  
 " *dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* For every  
 " one shall be SALTED WITH FIRE." (p) "Between  
 " us and you (who are in hell torment) there is a  
 " great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass  
 " from hence to you cannot; neither *can they pass to*  
 " *us that would come from thence.*" (q) "The Lord  
 " Jesus shall be manifested from heaven, with his  
 " mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on  
 " those that know not God, and that obey not the  
 " Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: and these shall  
 " suffer punishment, even everlasting destruction  
 " from the presence of the Lord and from the glory  
 " of his power." (r) "To these is reserved *the black-*  
 " *ness of darkness for ever.*" (s) "The smoke of their

(p) Mark, ix. 43—49.

(q) Luke, xvi. 26.

(r) 2 Thess. i. 7—9.

(s) Jude, 13.

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“ torment ascendeth *for ever and ever* ; and they have  
“ *no rest day nor night.*” (t) “ And the devil that de-  
“ ceived them was cast into the lake of fire and  
“ brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet  
“ are, and shall be tormented day and night *for*  
“ *ever and ever.*” (v)

Such, on the one hand, are the delightful, and on the other, the tremendous, declarations of Scripture. They are so plain and forcible, that it is scarcely credible that any other sentiments than those they inculcate, should be cherished by persons who profess to be believers in Christianity. Yet there are some who contend that the soul *sleeps*, utterly void of sense, consciousness, and activity, from the time of death till the day of judgment; the admission into any degree of happiness being suspended till that event: and others, who dream of *temporal* punishments after the time of life is past, who fancy that there is a state of preparation and improvement beyond the term of life, through which bad men will pass, and come out fitted for “the beatific vision of God.” Both these appear to me to be very great mistakes, though the latter is inconceivably the most dreadful. I shall, therefore, devote a few pages to each of them; beginning with that of *the sleep of the soul*.

Thought is as essential to mind, as figure is to matter. So that if we can suppose matter to exist without figure, we may suppose mind to exist without

(t) Rev. xiv. 11.

(v) Rev. xx. 10.

thought. “A real suspension of thought, then, is the  
“destruction of the mind; and what might be termed  
“a restoration of thought, would, in fact, be the for-  
“mation of a new mind. If therefore, at death, the  
“thinking principle should rest, should cease to act,  
“it would at the same instant cease to be. Its very  
“existence and character depend on its action. And  
“if, at the resurrection, the inspiration of the Al-  
“mighty should again make man a living soul, capa-  
“ble of thought, such an act of omnipotence, with  
“respect to mind, would be a new creation. The  
“mind, formed for inhabiting the glorified body,  
“would thus be another mind than that which formerly  
“possessed the body when in a state of mortality; the  
“identity of the soul would be destroyed: reward and  
“punishment would be useless; and a day of retribu-  
“tion unavailing.” For why should you and I be  
any way concerned for the happiness or misery of the  
men who should ages hence be raised from our ashes,  
when the future beings could be in no respect the same  
as us than as they were arbitrarily to be denominated  
the same, because their bodies were to be constituted  
of the same matter which now constitutes ours? Why  
should we regard any promised rewards or threatened  
punishments in another life, when they can only be  
enjoyments and sufferings of a new race of beings  
made out of the old materials which we dropped at  
our dissolution?

The notion, then, of *soul sleeping* is not without  
danger, since it deprives religion of its most cogent

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motives, or at least weakens them excessively. How, you may ask, do any persons contrive to deduce it from Scripture? Entirely, I believe, from the circumstance that death is frequently in Scripture depicted under the image of sleep. Dead persons are there often said to be “fallen asleep:” and in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, we are told that “they which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” But in such passages the word *sleep* is used in reference to the body; and I know not one in which the same metaphor is employed in allusion to the *soul*. In Daniel, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,” (*w*) applies manifestly to the body. More expressly still, we learn in Matthew “that the graves were opened, and many *bodies* of saints which *slept*, arose.” (*x*) And again, “David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, *fell asleep*, and was lain to his fathers, and *saw corruption*: but he whom God raised again saw no corruption.” (*y*) Here that which is described as falling asleep is evidently the body. Many other passages might be adduced to the same purpose.

It is also easy to quote or refer to various portions of the word of God which run directly counter to this opinion of the sleep of the soul. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, for example, we have a description of the state in which good and bad men are placed *immediately after death*, in which there is no

(*w*) Dan. xii. 2.    (*x*) Matt. xxvii. 52.    (*y*) Acts, xiii. 36, 37.

allusion to a suspension of happiness or misery; but, on the contrary, it appears that directly after the termination of mortal existence, the poor man was *comforted*, the rich *tormented*. Whether the delight and the anguish are equal to what they will be after the day of judgment, when the soul and body will be inseparably united, or whether they are principally the pleasurable and the dreadful anticipation of future bliss and woe, we are not taught: those points are, however, amply decided from other Scriptures;—and we, at least, learn from this that the soul does not, at death, pass into a state where it is unconscious of pleasure or pain. So again, when our Lord promised the penitent malefactor, on the cross, that he should “*that day be with him in Paradise,*” he could not mean that he should be conveyed thither *to sleep*: this would be sadly trifling with the trembling penitent’s feelings: and is perfectly incompatible both with the character of the Saviour, and with the solemn and important purposes for which he was then suffering. Once more, the doctrine of the sleep of the soul is irreconcilable with the language of the apostle Paul: “I am in a strait between two, having a desire “*to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;* “nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful “for you.”(z) If, after death, the soul *sleep* till the day of judgment, and that be all that is meant by *being with Christ*, not only is the phraseology very

(z) Phil. i. 23, 24.

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strange, but the apostle fancies himself in a difficult dilemma, when a sensible man would decide without hesitation. On the one hand, he might be useful to the Church, and might invite many more to "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls:" on the other, though he would die earlier, he would not earlier enter into glory, but would be rendered perfectly useless to those whom he loved as himself, and deemed "his joy and crown of rejoicing." Lastly, in another passage of the same apostle, he says, "Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we sojourn in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident, I say, and *willing* rather to be absent from the body, and *present with the Lord.*" (a) Here the expression, "present with the Lord," as a necessary consequence of the reasoning, implies happiness immediately subsequent to death; whereas sleep is not happiness, but insensibility. These passages, which have been quoted again and again to refute the doctrine of soul-sleeping, will, I doubt not, fully suffice to convince you that that doctrine is directly contradictory to many of the most stimulating and cheering promises in the New Testament.

I must now guard you against the adoption of the still more dangerous error, respecting the duration of future punishment; and I shall call your attention the more seriously and earnestly to this subject, because it is far from a matter merely speculative, but one of

(a) 2 Cor. v. 6, 8.



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the highest moment with regard to its practical tendency. The notion of punishment for a limited period has been espoused by many, in the earlier as well as the present times; but it was strongly opposed by the primitive Christians: "*We* say (observed Justin Martyr) that the souls of the wicked being reunited to the same bodies shall be consigned over to *eternal* torments; and *not*, as Plato will have it, to the period of *a thousand years only*: but if you will affirm this to be incredible or impossible, there is no help but you must fall from error to error till the day of judgment convinces you we are in the right." (b) They, who oppose the doctrine of the eternal suffering of bad men after death, have recourse

(b) Just. Mart. Apol. ii. § 8. The same sentiment is reiterated, and its tendency to stimulate to holy conduct most forcibly exhibited, in various parts of this admirable Apology. The contrary opinions, says this Apologist, are due to the suggestions of "evil spirits, who do all they can to smother the notion of hell-fire." "But since all departed souls *continue in sensation*, and *everlasting fire* is treasured up for the unrighteous, let me exhort you to lay these things seriously to heart." Yet Dr. Estlin, p. 18 of his "Discourses on Universal Restitution," adduces Justin Martyr as an evidence in favour of his opinions! I request the serious attention of this gentleman to the following observation of Dr. Waterland:—"It should be considered that the moral obliquity and turpitude of misquoting or misrepresenting authors, consists in this: that it is a means to deceive the simple, to surprise the unwary and unlearned (who must, or will, receive things upon trust); it is taking advantage of the blind side of human nature, laying a snare for such readers (perhaps ninety-nine in a hundred) as read not with due care and thought. I do not see but this very method of the Doctor's is big with all this mischief."



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to a variety of arguments; but they may be reduced to three, which I shall here consider.

I. It is said that, ‘since God is a Being whose goodness and mercy are indisputably infinite, he may naturally be expected to overlook inconsiderable errors; and even when he does punish, to observe a proportion between offences and punishments, and not punish temporary sins by inflicting eternal suffering, because that is unjust: he is bound by his nature and attributes to be merciful as well as just; and therefore not to make the greater portion of his intelligent creatures for ever unhappy.’

This argument, though specious, is by no means irrefutable; as I trust the following observations will show.

*First.* To argue from the Divine perfections by mere inference is a very convenient, but not very complete, way of disproving any assertion we please. In such case the arguer and his opponent have only each to take it for granted that he has an adequate idea of the Divine attributes, and the business is settled. But if this *cannot* be taken for granted, the *major* proposition of the syllogism is unfounded, and the whole necessarily falls. Now, this exactly occurs in the instance before us: on the one hand it is affirmed that God is bound to be merciful, and on the other hand it is admitted that he *will* be merciful to a certain extent, limited by his other attributes: but we have no measure of that extent (for “who hath known the mind of the Lord?”) except so far as he has fur-

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nished us with it in the Scriptures ;—and there we are sufficiently cautioned against relying upon mere mercy, “uncovenanted mercy,” by being assured that “the *wrath* of God *abideth on*” unbelievers, and that “he shall have judgment *without mercy*, that hath “showed no mercy.” (c)

2dly. If God is bound by his own nature to be merciful to his frail creatures, and to restore them to his favour after they have expiated their sins by intense suffering of limited duration, the work of redemption by Jesus Christ must be unnecessary. So that this argument operates unfavourably two ways at least : it nearly destroys all obligation to Jesus Christ for dying to expiate human guilt ; since the criminal would, according to this hypothesis, have suffered the full demerit of his own sins in a limited time : and it imputes to a being of unbounded wisdom, justice, and love, the injustice of bruising his dearly beloved Son, of putting him to grief and shame, and leading him to an ignominious death, to cancel the sins of mankind, which he was bound to forgive without any such sacrifice.

3dly. As, in human courts of judicature, criminals are naturally inclined to estimate too lightly their own turpitude, and to think the punishment inflicted upon them much too heavy ; so, in like manner, may it be with regard to transgressions against God. None of us estimate duly the “exceeding sinfulness of sin :” for we have all been guilty of it, and are, therefore,

(c) John, iii. 36. James, ii. 13.

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all inclined to palliate it: and if to palliate it, then to lessen the punishment we think it justly deserves: so that, on this account, as well as because of our ignorance of the attributes of Deity, we are totally unqualified to determine (and much more in opposition to positive declarations) the adequate duration or magnitude of future punishment.

4thly. We know not to what extent future misery may result from the nature and duration of the soul, independently of punishment absolutely inflicted. The loss of the chief good, and exclusion from heaven, are the necessary consequences of transgression; and a consciousness of this loss, as well as remorse and self-condemnation on account of it, follow naturally from the existence of the soul: these *may* constitute the venom of “the worm that never dies,” and the fierceness of “the fire that is not quenched;” and it is easy to see that it may be perfectly equitable in the Divine Being to suffer these to continue. If the greater part of the punishment be *conscious guilt*, that does not seem very likely to produce purity, holiness, and love to God, and thus ultimately to issue, as the Universalists imagine, in restoration to the Divine favour.

5thly. It by no means follows that, because impenitent sinners will be eternally punished, God ‘makes the *greater portion* of his intelligent creatures ‘for ever unhappy.’ Yet this, in the estimation of Dr. Hartley (one of the most able and excellent men that ever defended the system of the Universalists), is

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the grand argument. “To suppose (says he) future  
 “punishments to be absolutely eternal, is to suppose  
 “that the Christian dispensation condemns *far the*  
 “*greater part of mankind to infinite misery* upon the  
 “balance, whilst yet it is every where declared to be  
 “a dispensation of mercy, to be *glory to God* and  
 “*good will to men*; which is a great apparent incon-  
 “sistency.” (d) To remove this apparent inconsis-  
 tency, then, let it be recollected, that at least *half* the  
 children which are born, die before they are seven  
 years old, and are doubtless happy in a future world,  
 their faculties being expanded at death so as to pre-  
 pare them for the full enjoyment of heaven; (e)—that  
 such of the heathen as “do by nature the things con-  
 “tained in the law,” and whose consciences “ex-  
 “cuse” or acquit them, conformably to the true  
 meaning of the apostle, (f) will be admitted into bliss  
 for the Redeemer’s sake: that though, for ages, true  
 Christians may have been the minority, yet a time  
*will* come, and that not of short duration, when “the  
 “*earth shall be FULL of the knowledge of the Lord, as*

(d) Hartley on Man, vol. ii. ch. 5. prop. 95.

(e) “Of *such* is the kingdom of God.” Matt. xix. 14.

(f) Rom. ii. 14, 15. See also Baxter’s End of Doctrinal Controversies, chap. xii. § 3. ch. xiii. & xvi. I might likewise refer to Dr. Macknight *in loc.* and in various parts of his Commentary and Notes: but though I appreciate his learning highly, and think that in many parts of his valuable work on the Epistles he diffuses considerable light over the sacred text, I still apprehend that he often carries his speculations much farther than a sound theologian can accompany him.

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“ *the waters cover the sea :*” (g) let these, I say, be recollected, and duly considered, and there will not remain the shadow of a suspicion that the *greater* part of mankind will be eternally miserable.

6thly. Waving all these considerations, it may be remarked that the measure of penalty will be regulated by the just ends of government, and not necessarily by either the quality of the offence, or the time of its performance. If the suffering were proportionate to the *time* of commission, then it would follow that some of the greatest crimes, such as murder or suicide, which may be committed in a much shorter time than many other less heinous sins, would for that reason be more slightly punished ; which is repugnant to all correct ideas of justice. So that the objection of temporary crimes being punished by indefinitely long sufferings is, plainly, of no force. And as to the *ad valorem* punishment, if that alone were threatened, the consequences would obviously be, that petty sins would abound, that the heart and conscience would become cauterized by an indulgence in them, and thence proceed without a pang to the commission of greater crimes. The grand design of government is to prevent all crime : and if the apportioning of penalties to transgressions be not so properly a consideration of justice, as a matter of prudence and wisdom in the lawgiver, then *justice* cannot well be said to be concerned in any imagined disproportion

between sins and sufferings. But justice is concerned in this, that the righteous and the wicked should not be treated alike, as well as that greater sins should have a heavier punishment; all which may evidently be adjusted in the degree and intenseness of suffering, without there being any difference in its duration.

7thly. However, it must be observed, “ that the “ primary end of all threatenings is not punishment, “ but the *prevention* of it. For God does not threaten “ that men may sin, and be punished; but that they may “ *not sin*, and so escape the punishment threatened. “ And therefore the higher the threatening runs, so “ much the more mercy and goodness there is in it, “ because it is so much the more likely to hinder men “ from incurring the penalty that is threatened.” (h)

II. Those who reject the doctrine of eternal punishment contend that the word which we translate *to punish* is often used in a mitigated sense; and they farther bring forward many passages to show either that after a certain portion of suffering the criminal will be restored to favour, or that “ eternal death” means annihilation.

Thus, in their note on Matt. xxv. 46, the recent Socinian Translators (so frequently quoted in these letters) say, “ the word here rendered *punishment* properly signifies correction inflicted for the *benefit* of “ the offender.” To this it may be replied that the true signification of *κολασις*, (the word adverted to) is punishment in general: my authorities are first

(h) Tillotson’s 35th Sermon.



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*Hesychius*, who explains it by τιμορια: and, secondly, *Scapula*, who translates it *punitio, item castigatio*. But farther, in 1 John, iv. 18, we find the same word translated by *torment* even in the Socinian version; and it is not easy to trace there any reference to a torment for the benefit of the person tormented. So again, in Acts, iv. 21, where the word is *κολασωνται*, we cannot perceive how the *punishment*, with which the apostles Peter and John were threatened, was calculated for their benefit. And once more, in 2 Peter, ii. 9, where we are told that “the Lord knoweth how to deliver those that are godly out of trial, and to reserve those that are unrighteous to the day of judgment to be punished (*κολαζομενους*);” the phrase surely cannot imply punishment for the *benefit* of the offender; because, if so, the *worst* offenders are singled out to experience that benefit: for, according to these very translators, they are “chiefly those who walk after the flesh with *polluted desires*, and *despise dominion*: who are *presumptuous, self-willed*, and *not afraid to blaspheme dignities*,” &c. that are selected to undergo this *beneficial* process.

As to the passages usually adduced to prove that the punishment in a future world will be annihilation, it may be remarked, first, that a state of misery, which is as bad or worse than *death*, may without impropriety be called by that name, as indeed it often is by the best ancient Roman and Greek authors; and thus “the *lake of fire*” into which the wicked shall be cast, to be there tormented, is expressly called “the



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“ *second death.*” (i) And secondly, if “ eternal death ” mean eternal annihilation, then all positive punishment and torment is excluded, contrary to the language of our Lord, who says “ there shall be *weeping*, “ and *wailing*, and *gnashing of teeth* ; ” and besides, upon this hypothesis, the punishment of all sinners must be equal, because annihilation is *not-being*, in which there can be no degrees : but this is contrary to all ideas of justice.

The other notion, that is, of annihilation after a temporary punishment, has not the least foundation in Scripture, and is in itself too absurd to demand any specific reply : and with regard to all these speculations respecting mitigated suffering, it may be remarked once for all, that if the Divine Being intended his threatenings should have their full effect in deterring from crime, it cannot be conceived that in the same Revelation he should have given any intimations of his intention to mitigate their severity, or not to execute them at all. If it be wise to excite the strongest dread of future punishment, any other declarations, intended to weaken that impression, would be *unwise*.

III. But the grand current of the arguments against the eternal duration of future punishment flows from the affirmed limited meaning of the words *αιων*, *αιωνιον*, &c. which it, therefore, becomes necessary to examine rather particularly.

“ The word translated *everlasting* ” (say the late

Socinian translators) (k) “ is often used to express a  
 “ long but indefinite duration: Rom. xvi. 25.; 2  
 “ Tim. i. 9; Philemon, ver. 15. This text, *therefore*,  
 “ so far from giving countenance to the harsh doctrine  
 “ of eternal misery, is rather *favourable* to the more  
 “ pleasing and more probable hypothesis, of the  
 “ ultimate restitution of the wicked to *virtue* and to  
 “ *happiness*.”

I certainly can trace no allusion to either ultimate virtue or happiness in the express declaration, “ these  
 “ shall go away into everlasting punishment; but  
 “ the righteous into life eternal:” or at least, I  
 must be permitted to think that if the wicked may extract a grain of hope from so strong a passage, the righteous have at least equal reason to dread, that, after a similar duration, they may lapse from virtue and happiness into wickedness and misery; and thus the good and the bad may change places at the termination of that *æonian* period, which is here alike placed before each class of persons. It can never, I conceive, be consistent with sound criticism, to interpret the same word used twice in the same sentence and connexion, and in both directly applicable to the *soul*, which is naturally immortal, so as to indicate eternity in the one instance, and terminable duration in the other.

But the word *αιωνιος*, we are told, is *sometimes* employed to express a limited but very long duration,

(k) Note on Matt. xxv. 46, p. 62.

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and is three or four times (perhaps) so used in Scripture; being indeed derived from αἰων, which denotes duration or continuance of time, but with great variety; and “*therefore*” it can never mean eternity. I will not here argue from the probable derivation, αἰεὶ ὦν, *always being*; (l) but consider what is thus advanced in opposition to the more received opinions, as emanating from an established canon of criticism, to which all subordinate considerations must bend. This canon may, I suppose, be fairly enunciated thus: ‘When words have by frequent use deviated from their primitive meaning, we must in all our searches into the real meanings of authors, especially in disputed matters, endeavour to ascertain the original sense of such words, and thereby abide.’ Unless this be a legitimate canon of criticism, the “*therefore*” of the critics just quoted stands for nothing: let us then apply it to a few examples.

1. To *discourse* means primarily to *run up and*

(l) That *continued existence* is the essential idea comprehended in the word we know upon the authority of Aristotle. Speaking of the celestial intelligences, he says, they are “without change or infirmity, and possessing a most excellent and satisfactory life, they continue through all eternity” (διατελεῖ τὸν ἀπαντα αἰῶνα). Then follows this remarkable passage:—“For this word has been divinely spoken by the ancients: For the consummation containing the time of every life not supernatural is called *its age*: (its period of duration). For the same reason, the consummation of the whole heaven, and the consummation containing the unlimited duration, and the immensity of all things, is *eternity*, deriving its name from *always being*—immortal and divine.” Lib i. Coel. c. 10.

down: "therefore" when a person delivers a moral or religious discourse he runs up and down.

2. *Sarah* signifies originally a lady or a princess: "therefore" every one named Sarah is a lady or a princess.

3. *Φιλαργυρια*, according to its primary acceptation, signifies the love of *silver*: "therefore" it can never denote avarice, or the love of money generally; and consequently 1 Tim. vi. 10, is erroneously translated in every version extant.

4. *Αγγελος* originally denotes a mere messenger: "therefore" it never means any thing else;—therefore Acts, xii. 16, should be rendered "It is his messenger;" (*m*)—and Matt. xiii. 39, should be, "the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the messengers;"—and we have thence an irresistible exhortation to hospitality in Heb. xiii. 3, "for by this some have unknowingly entertained messengers!"

5. *Διαβολος* means primarily an accuser, informer, or slanderer: "therefore" it cannot properly denote any thing else;—therefore John, viii. 44, should be rendered "Ye are of your father the slanderer;"—Acts, x. 38, should be "Jesus went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the slanderer;"—Matthew, xiii. 39, should be "the enemy that sowed them is the informer;"—and 1 Pet. v. 8, might be translated very consistently with these no-

tions, “ Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the *informer*, walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

6. *Αἰδιος* in its primary use denoted eternal in a restrained sense, and is, in fact, employed in Jude, ver. 6, to signify without *end* only, and not without beginning also: “ therefore ” it can never properly indicate *absolute* eternity, and consequently Rom. i. 20, contains no full and positive declaration of God’s eternal power and Divinity.

7. *Πνευμα* primarily denotes breath or wind; “ therefore ” Rom. viii. 26, should commence with “ The *wind* helpeth our infirmities ; ”—and James, ii. 26, should be translated, “ the body without the *wind* is dead.” Hence also the propriety of the exhortation in Gal. v. 16,—“ Walk in the *wind* ; ”—and hence again the axiomatic evidence of the proposition in Gal. vi. 8,—“ He that soweth to the wind “ shall of the *wind* reap *age-lasting* life ; ”—as well as of that in John, iv. 24,—“ God is a *wind*.”

8. *Θεος*, from *θεω*, to place, is a name borrowed from the heathen, being that by which they denoted an imaginary god, or an idol made with hands: in this sense it is sometimes used in the New Testament, as at Acts, xiv. 11. xxviii. 6. 1 Cor. viii. 5: “ there-fore ” we must not be confident that the word can ever designate any other than false gods.

All these “ *therefores*,” strange and ridiculous as they may appear to you, are just as “ pleasing and “ probable,” so far as the genuine meaning of the re-

spective words and passages is determinable by means of this much admired rule of interpretation, as the inference that *κολασιν αιωνιον* denotes *limited* suffering for the *good* of offenders, to terminate in their eternal holiness and happiness.

Indeed, this curious mode of enucleating difficulties, and rendering Scripture plain and simple, furnishes us with many “pleasing” deductions: and among others it has the happy effect of rendering the “glorious Gospel of the blessed God” nearly if not entirely, nugatory. Thus, as we have seen, it would leave us in doubt as to the existence of any being invisible to us; for “messengers” and “accusers” may be very different beings from angels and devils: and farther, instead of having “life and immortality brought to light through the Gospel,” (n) the Gospel would be stripped of almost every direct declaration relative to immortality (as *αφθαρσια* may mean incorruptibility only, and *αιωνιος* terminable existence), and we should have to gather this cheering and consoling truth from remote and circuitous inference.

Some patronizers of the hypothesis I am now opposing appear to think this no great objection to their system; but are prepared to expel from the New Testament the forcible English words and phrases *eternal*, *everlasting*, *for ever*, *world without end*, &c. and to substitute in their place words from a dead language which themselves acknowledge they do not well com-

(n) 2 Tim. i. 10.



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prehend, and which to a plain unlettered Christian can convey no definite idea whatever. Hence, as has been remarked by an ingenious anonymous author on this subject, when men look “into this sacred  
“volume for the important information promised,  
“they there read of an *æonian* God, who regards his  
“people with an *æonian* love, has made with them  
“in Christ an *æonian* covenant, provided for them  
“an *æonian* salvation, together with an *æonian* righteousness, through which they shall now experience  
“*æonian* consolation, and finally possess *æonian* life  
“in an *æonian* kingdom: but that if they reject and  
“despise all this, they will be compelled to suffer  
“*æonian* punishment. In this case how great their  
“disappointment and mortification!” (o)

After these observations it can scarcely be necessary for me to *affirm* that the Greek word, so frequently used in Scripture with regard to a future world, expresses correctly a proper eternity; or, to support that affirmation by examples. I shall, however, refer you to two portions of Scripture which have been often and properly quoted as decisive, namely, Rev. xx. 10, and 2 Cor. iv. ult. In the first mentioned of these the phrase *εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων* is so energetic, that if it do not fully signify eternity to come, I know nothing in the Greek language which does. And in the latter specified passage the things which are seen,

(o) Free Strictures on “An Address to Candid and Serious  
“Men.”



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all things visible or material, the world and every thing in it, are put in complete opposition to the unseen future state; the things which are seen being said to be for a short time (or temporary), while the things which are not seen are *everlasting*.

To bring these arguments to a conclusion, let me remark that the awful picture of the duration and terrible nature of future punishment exhibited in the passage from the 9th chapter of Mark's Gospel, introduced in an early part of this letter, is calculated to produce the deepest conviction in the minds of all who receive the Scriptures as the word of God. The expression, "*where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,*" is reiterated with solemn and dreadful energy: and the declaration, "*every one shall be salted with fire,*" implies, I conceive, if it imply any thing, that as salt preserves from putrefaction flesh to which it is applied, so those unhappy victims of Divine justice shall be salted with fire, and, instead of being consumed by it, shall, in the wretched abodes to which they are consigned, continue immortal in the midst of their flames! This sentiment was decidedly avowed by Tertullian, who in his Apologetic (cap. 48.) says, "The profane and the hypocrite shall be doomed to a lake of ever flowing fire, and *fueled with incorruptibility* from the Divine indefectable nature of the flame which torments them! The mountains burn with perpetual fire, and are mountains still: why, then, may not the wicked and the enemies of God burn like these?"

How far the misery of the eternal state will be corporeal, and how far mental, I pretend not to decide: but I will extract for your perusal a sentence or two from Dr. Hartley, who, you will recollect, was a *Universalist*, though much too sincere a lover of truth to run the length in support of the “restoration” hypothesis which some later writers have gone.

“ With respect to the punishment of the wicked in a  
“ future state (says he) we may observe, that these  
“ may be corporeal, though the happiness of the bless-  
“ ed should not be so. For sensuality is one great part  
“ of vice, and a principal source of it. It may be neces-  
“ sary, therefore, that actual fire should feed upon the  
“ elementary body, and whatever else is added to it  
“ after the resurrection, in order to burn out the stains  
“ of sin. The elementary body may also perhaps bear  
“ the action of fire for ages, without being destroyed.  
“ Like the *caput mortuum*, or *terra damnata* of the  
“ chemists. For this *terra damnata* remains after  
“ the calcination of vegetable and animal substances  
“ by intense and long continued fires. The destruc-  
“ tion of the world by fire, spoken of both in the  
“ Scriptures and in many profane writings, the  
“ phenomena of comets, and of the sun and fixed stars,  
“ those vast bodies of fire which burn for ages, the  
“ great quantity of sulphureous matter contained in  
“ the bowels of the earth, the destruction of Sodom  
“ and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone alluded to in  
“ the New Testament, the representation of future  
“ punishment under the emblem of the fire of Gehen-

“ na, and, above all, the express passages of Scripture,  
 “ in which it is declared that the wicked shall be  
 “ punished by fire, *even everlasting fire*, confirm this  
 “ position concerning the corporeal nature of future  
 “ punishment, as well as give light to one another.

“ But if the punishments of another world should  
 “ be corporeal in some measure, there is still the  
 “ greatest reason to believe, that they will be spiritual  
 “ also; and that by selfishness, ambition, malevo-  
 “ lence, envy, revenge, cruelty, profaneness, mur-  
 “ muring against God, infidelity, and blasphemy,  
 “ men will become tormentors to themselves, and to  
 “ each other; deceive and be deceived; infatuate and  
 “ be infatuated; so as not to be able to repent and  
 “ turn to God, till the appointed time comes, *if that*  
 “ *should* EVER be.

“ But we are not to suppose that the degree, pro-  
 “ bably not the duration of future punishment, cor-  
 “ poreal or mental, will be the same to all. It may  
 “ also *perhaps* be, that there may be some alleviating  
 “ circumstances, or even some admixture of happi-  
 “ ness. *Only the Scriptures do NOT authorize any such*  
 “ *conjectures; and therefore we ought to proceed with*  
 “ *the utmost caution, lest we lead ourselves or others*  
 “ *into a fatal mistake.* And indeed, if the happiness  
 “ of the blessed be pure and unmixed, as the Scrip-  
 “ tures seem to declare, and give reason to hope,  
 “ then may the misery of the wicked be *unmixed*  
 “ also.” (p)

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Such is the language of Dr. Hartley; from which you will perceive that *his* expectations of future punishment being any thing short of everlasting unmitigated anguish and despair, were very faint indeed. Happy would it be for the interests of religion and the extermination of vice, if all subsequent defenders of similar opinions had proceeded with equal diffidence and candour. (q) I regret that the length to which it has been necessary to carry my reasonings, and the number of texts I have been obliged to select in order

(q) Dr. Thomas Burnet, in his *Latin* treatise on the "State of the Dead and those who rise again," opposes the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, and points to some of the ancient fathers who *seem* to be of the same opinion with him: but he tells his readers that those fathers, when they treated of this subject, often gave the same advice to others which he gives in these words: "Whatsoever you determine within yourself, and in your own breast, concerning these punishments, whether they are eternal or no, yet you ought to use the common doctrine and the common language, when you preach or speak to the people, especially those of the lower rank, who are ready to run headlong into vice, and are to be restrained from evil only by the fear of punishment: and even among good Christians there are infants to be nourished with milk; nor is their diet to be rashly changed, lest through intemperance they fall into diseases." And he adds, "Whosoever shall translate these sentiments, I shall think it was done with an evil design, and to bad purpose." What a remarkable concession! The poor have the Gospel preached unto them; and yet there is one doctrine of that Gospel they must not be taught. And with regard to the Doctor's treatise, if it should not be translated, I would ask, with Dr. Watts, "Why did he write it, and leave it to be published? Did he suppose all men and boys who understand *Latin* to be sufficiently guarded against the abuse of such an opinion?"

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to show the fallacy and danger of their theory, prevents my expatiating, as I intended, upon the indefinite and perpetual extension of the intellectual and moral faculties, which will be experienced by the "spirits of the just made perfect" in the heavenly world. That you may not lose any thing, however, but gain considerably by this omission, permit me to close the present letter by referring you to the second of Dr. Watts's discourses in his work on "Death and Heaven:" a discourse which contains the most fascinating and inspiring description of the employments, the holiness, and the happiness, of glorified saints, I have ever perused; and which no one, I conceive, who has any pretensions to taste and sensibility, to say nothing of piety, can read without surprise and delight.

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XXII.

*On Christian Duties.*

LACTANTIUS, an ancient father of the church, in one of his appeals to the adversaries of true religion, drew a bold, but not unfaithful, picture of the genuine effects of the Gospel upon the heart and conduct of sincere Christians:—"Give me, (says he) a man who is  
" choleric, abusive in his language, headstrong, and  
" unruly; and with a very few words, (the words of  
" God,) he shall be rendered gentle as a lamb.—Give  
" me a greedy, avaricious, close-fisted man, and I  
" will presently return him to you a generous creature, freely bestowing his money by handful. Give  
" me a cruel, blood-thirsty wretch, instantly his ferocity shall be transformed into a truly mild and merciful disposition.—Give me an unjust man, a  
" foolish man, a sinful man; and on a sudden he  
" shall become honest, wise, and virtuous. In one  
" laver, (the laver of regeneration) all his wickedness  
" shall be washed away. So great is the efficacy of  
" the *Divine Wisdom*, that when once admitted into  
" the human heart, it expels folly, the parent of all  
" vice; and in accomplishing this great end, there is  
" no occasion for any expense, no absolute need of  
" books, or deep and long study or meditation. The  
" benefit is conferred gratuitously, easily, expedi-

“tiously; provided the ears and the heart *thirst af-*  
“*ter wisdom.* Did any, or *could* any of the heathen  
“philosophers accomplish such important purposes  
“as this?” (r)

This language of the *Christian Cicero* (as he was usually denominated) conveys no vain and empty boast; nor does it, under pretence of exalting Religion, insult and trample upon reason and philosophy. The effects here ascribed to religion have been frequently produced by it, and will always be produced when it is allowed its genuine and complete operation. And with respect to the supposed insult offered to reason, there can be no such thing, unless that be an insult to reason, which renders its real nature palpable, and guards against the abuse of it while it teaches its proper use. Reason has been termed, and not improperly, “*the EYE of the soul:*” for as the eye cannot see without light, so neither can reason know without instruction. The progress of mankind in learning and science has been made, strictly speaking, by *groping*, by feeling out one truth after another, and adding it to the general stock; except, indeed, when some grand discoveries have been struck out once in a century, or perhaps less, by the force of genius; but even these, whatever benefits may have resulted from them, have not been discoveries of such truths or propositions, as are developed in Revealed Religion. Reason can no more instruct itself, because it knows by

(r) Lactan. Lib. iii. de fals. sapient. c. 26. p. 328. Ed. 1660.



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instruction, than the eye can give light to itself, because it sees by the light. This observation applies peculiarly to religious matters; and you may safely infer from it, that “a man may as well take a view of things upon earth in a dark night, by the light of his own eye, as pretend to discover the things of heaven, in the night of nature, by the light of his own reason.” (s) Upon these points, says a very powerful reasoner, Bishop Horsley, “the evidence of Holy Scripture  
 “ is, indeed, the only thing that amounts to proof. The  
 “ utmost that reasoning *can* do, is to lead to the dis-  
 “ covery, and by God’s grace, to the humble acknow-  
 “ ledgment, of the weakness and insufficiency of rea-  
 “ son; to resist her encroachments upon the province  
 “ of faith; to silence her objections, and cast down  
 “ imaginations, and prevent the innovations and re-  
 “ finements of philosophy and vain deceit.”

The grand attributes of reason are, its capability of receiving, and, when properly disciplined, of retaining, whatever is communicated to it, and its power of discriminating, when it has suitable data, between truth and falsehood, or between fitness and want of fitness to accomplish certain purposes. And these attributes are possessed in the highest perfection, when, as Paul expresses it, “ the eyes of our under-  
 “ standing, (*της διανοιας*, the faculty of separation or  
 “ discernment) being enlightened, we may know  
 “ what is the hope of our calling, and what the

(s) Bishop Horne.

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“ riches of the glory of our inheritance in the saints,  
“ and what is the exceeding greatness of his power  
“ toward us who believe.” (t) Now, if these faculties of the soul be duly exercised, it will be seen that the religion of Jesus Christ is all it professes to be, and is capable of effecting all that its advocates ascribe to it; that it is conformable to the highest reason, and is, therefore, deserving of the warmest admiration and of the most cordial reception. The religion we are taught in the Gospel leads inevitably to the exaltation and perfection of our noblest faculties: it requires us to use the things of this life as in reason they ought to be used, to cherish such tempers and dispositions as are the glory of intelligent creatures, to avoid such conduct as would degrade and debase our nature, to walk in such wisdom as exalts our character, to practise such piety as will raise us above the world and elevate us to God.

“ His hand the good man fastens on the skies,

“ And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.” YOUNG

If these be the genuine productions of religion, it is plain that they can never be too universally known and felt. Hence results the duty of promulgating religious knowledge to the widest extent; as well as that of bringing every action of life under the influence of religious principles: for if it be advantageous for *one* person to be wise, it is more so for *all* to be wise; and, if it be productive of profit and delight to an in-

(t) Eph. i. 18, 19.

dividual to be once wise, it is infinitely more so for him to be wise always. If it be commendable to avoid sin and folly to-day, it will be equally commendable to avoid them to-morrow, and to the end of life : if God ought to be worshipped and loved “ with all the heart, “ and mind, and soul, and strength ” now, he ought to be so worshipped and loved for ever : if the faithful discharge of every personal and relative duty be required of us now, it is equally required of us always : if, being pure, and holy, and free from guile, if exercising ourselves to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures and the glory of God, if aspiring after communion with the Deity, be productive of “ joy and “ peace ” to-day, they will have a like tendency through life, and will assuredly issue in indescribable, unending, felicity. So that, as he knows not truly what reason is, who does not always wish to live conformably to it; neither does he know the true use or nature of religion, who wishes to confine it to times, or seasons, or persons, or places. “ He who thinks “ it grievous to live always in the spirit of religion, to “ have every part of his life full of it, would think it “ much more grievous to be as the angels of God in “ heaven.”

There is a unity of design in the gift of the Christian Religion, and there must, in like manner, be unity of design in the profession of it. Its immediate tendency is at once to promote the glory of God and the happiness of man; and its various doctrines, precepts, and promises, all converge towards that

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grand point. Selfishness, is, therefore, excluded; while happiness, individual, as well as general, is necessarily predicated and insured in the Christian system. Its promises allure the soul to heaven, while they prompt the believer to benevolent and upright conduct: its doctrines expand and delight the intellectual faculties, while they furnish the strongest possible motives to virtue and holiness. (v) Thus it happens that the Scriptures, as I have before observed, furnish a consistent and harmonious, though not a connected scheme of morality: for the scheme is harmonious, in so far as the same great purposes are always kept in view, and as it includes no contradictory or impossible injunctions; though its various precepts are scattered about, and not strictly connected, because one and another were delivered at distinct times to different persons, according to their respective circumstances and necessities.

Faith and practice constitute the whole of our religion; and none of the sacred writers is ever, as I recollect, so exclusively occupied with one of these as to forget or neglect the other. Hence, Christians are not merely exhorted to believe such and such propositions, but they are reminded that such belief, to be beneficial, must be influential; and they are exhorted to “let their conversation or conduct be as becometh

(v) “Chose admirable! La Religion Chrétienne, qui ne semble  
“avoir d’objet que le félicité de l’autre vie, fait encore notre bon-  
“heur dans celle-ci.” MONTESQUIEU.

“ the Gospel,” that they “ may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ” they are to “ shine as lights in the world.” (*w*)

Christianity, then, is decidedly moral in its tendencies: and, therefore, since I have taken some pains to explain to you what is proposed for your *belief*, it is natural that you should expect me, before I close our correspondence, to devote a few pages to the enumeration of the chief *practical* duties which are binding upon Christians. This I shall now attempt with all possible regard to brevity, wishing you to consider it as a bare enumeration, and earnestly referring you to the Bible itself, as to the richest storehouse of moral precepts. In this enumeration, I shall adopt the order of several moral philosophers, and consider, 1st, the duties a man owes to himself; 2dly, those which he owes to society; 3dly, those which are due to God.

1. PERSONAL DUTIES. These will manifestly be such as tend to preserve our health, and to secure our happiness; for “ Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come:” they will, therefore, include the government of our affections, appetites, and passions, the regulation and improvement of our temper, the purification of the heart, and an increase of useful know-

ledge. Thus, we are earnestly exhorted to humility, meekness, temperance, chastity, and modesty, diligence, contentment, cheerfulness, self-denial and mortification, and to edification in general; all the contrary vices being forbidden in the most forcible terms. To prove this I need quote but a very few precepts and aphorisms; for the sake of some order, taking the words as I have already placed them before you.

*Humility.* “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for  
 “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” “Whosoever  
 “shall humble himself as a little child, the same is  
 “the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” “Let the  
 “brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted;  
 “but the rich in that he is made low.” “I charge  
 “every one among you not to think of himself more  
 “highly than he ought to think; but to think sober-  
 “ly, accordingly as God hath dealt to every man  
 “the measure of faith.” “Mind not high things;  
 “but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise  
 “in your own conceits.” “Who maketh thee to dif-  
 “fer from another? and what hast thou, that thou  
 “didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why  
 “dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”  
 “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the  
 “humble. Humble yourselves therefore in the sight  
 “of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” (x)

(x) Matt. v. 3. xviii. 4. James, i. 9. Rom. xii. 3, 16. 1 Cor.  
 v. 7. James, iv. 6, 7, 10.

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*Meekness.* Meekness is a “fruit of the Spirit.” “The meek will God guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.” “He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.” “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words, there is more hope of a fool than of him.” “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.” “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” “Be angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil.” (y)

*Temperance.* “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.” “When thou sittest to eat, consider diligently what is before thee; and put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat. Be not amongst wine-bibbers nor amongst riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.” “They that are drunken are drunken in the night; but let us who are of the day be sober.” “Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness.” For “drunkenness, revellings, and such like, are works of the flesh;” and “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom

(y) Gal. v. 23. Ps. xxv. 9. Prov. xiv. 17, 29. xxix. 20. Eccles. vii. 9. Phil. iv. 5. Eph. iv. 26, 27.



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“ of God:” but “ temperance is a fruit of the  
“ Spirit.” “ They that count it pleasure to riot in  
“ the day time, sporting themselves with their own  
“ deceivings while they feast, shall receive the reward  
“ of unrighteousness.” (z)

*Chastity and Modesty.* “ This is the will of God,  
“ even our sanctification; that ye should abstain  
“ from fornication; that every one of you should  
“ know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and  
“ honour; not in the lusts of concupiscence, as the  
“ Gentiles which know not God.” “ God hath not  
“ called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.”  
“ Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the  
“ soul.” “ Walk not as other Gentiles walk; who,  
“ being past feeling, have given themselves over to  
“ lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness greedily.”  
“ Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her,  
“ hath committed adultery with her already in his  
“ heart.” “ Put all filthy communication out of  
“ your mouth; indulge neither filthiness, nor foolish  
“ talking.” “ Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor  
“ effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,  
“ shall enter into the kingdom of God.” “ Know ye  
“ not that ye are the temple of God; and that your  
“ body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in  
“ you? If any man defile the temple of God, him

(z) Luke, xxi. 34. Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 20, 21. 1 Thess. v. 7, 8.  
Rom. xiii. 13. Gal. v. 19, 21, 22, 23. 2 Pet. ii. 13.

“ shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy,  
 “ which temple are ye.” “ Blessed are the pure in  
 “ heart, for they shall see God.” “ Let women  
 “ adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-  
 “ facedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair,  
 “ or gold, or pearls, or costly array : but (which be-  
 “ cometh women professing godliness) with good  
 “ works.” “ Abstain from all *appearance* of evil.” (a)  
*Diligence.* “ In the morning sow thy seed, and  
 “ in the evening withhold not thine hand ; for thou  
 “ knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or  
 “ that ; or whether they both shall be alike good.”  
 “ Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways  
 “ and be wise ; which having no guide, overseer,  
 “ nor ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and  
 “ gathereth her food in the harvest.” “ Be not  
 “ slothful.” Let every man “ labour, working  
 “ with his hands the thing which is good, that he  
 “ may have to give to him that needeth.” “ There  
 “ are some which walk disorderly, working not at all,  
 “ but are busy bodies : now them that are such, we  
 “ command and exhort by our Lord Jesus, that  
 “ with quietness they work and eat their own bread.  
 “ If any man will not work, neither should he eat.”  
 “ Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? He shall

(a) 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 5, 7. 1 Pet. ii. 11. Eph. iv. 17. 19. Matt.  
 ix. 28. Col. iii. 8. Eph. v. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 19. iii. 16.  
 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Thess. v. 22.

“ stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean  
 “ men.” “ Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ;  
 “ serving the Lord.” (b)

*Contentment.* “ Give me neither poverty nor  
 “ riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest  
 “ I be full, and deny thee, and say, ‘ Who is the  
 “ Lord ?’ or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the  
 “ name of my God in vain.” “ A little that a right-  
 “ eous man hath is better than the riches of many  
 “ wicked.” “ Better is a little with the fear of the  
 “ Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith.”  
 “ He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be inno-  
 “ cent.” “ Be not thou afraid when one is made rich,  
 “ when the glory of his house is increased : for though  
 “ while he lived he blessed his soul ; yet when he  
 “ dieth he shall carry nothing away ; his glory shall  
 “ not descend after him.” “ I know both how to be  
 “ abased and how to abound. I have learnt in what-  
 “ soever state I am, therewith to be content.” “ Let  
 “ every man abide in the same calling wherein he  
 “ was called. Art thou called, being a servant (a *slave*,  
 “ *δουλος*) ? care not for it : but if thou mayest be made  
 “ free, use it rather.” “ I would have you without  
 “ anxiety ; that they which weep may be as though  
 “ they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they  
 “ rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they  
 “ possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not  
 “ abusing it. For the fashion of this world passeth

(b) Eccles. xi. 6. Prov. vi. 7, 8. Heb. vi. 12. Eph. iv. 28.  
 2 Thess. iii. 10—12. Prov. xxii. 29. Rom. xii. 11.

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“ away.” “ Having food and raiment, let us be there-  
 “ with content. But they that will be rich fall into  
 “ temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and  
 “ hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and  
 “ perdition. For avarice is the root of all evils, which  
 “ some grasping at, have wandered away from the  
 “ faith, and pierced themselves all around with many  
 “ sorrows.” “ Lay not up for yourselves treasures  
 “ upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and  
 “ where thieves break through and steal: but lay up  
 “ for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither  
 “ moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do  
 “ not break through nor steal: for where your trea-  
 “ sure is there will your heart be also.” (c)

*Religious Joy and Cheerfulness.* “ Rejoice in the  
 “ Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for  
 “ the upright.” “ Light is sown for the righteous,  
 “ and gladness for the upright in heart.” “ Rejoice  
 “ in hope of the glory of God.” “ Rejoice in the  
 “ Lord always, and again I say rejoice.” Believing  
 in Jesus Christ, “ ye rejoice with joy unspeakable  
 “ and full of glory.” “ Let the brother of low degree  
 “ rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he  
 “ is made low.” “ In every thing give thanks; for this is

(c) Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Ps. xxxvii. 16. Prov. xv. 16. xxviii. 20.  
 Ps. xlix. 16—18. Phil. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. vii. 21, 30—32.  
 1 Tim. vi. 8—10. Matt. vi. 19—21. It will be perceived, that I  
 have taken the liberty of translating 1 Tim. vi. 10, so as to preserve  
 the metaphor, which has always appeared to me to be very beautiful  
 and striking.

“ the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you.”  
 “ Be always cheerful.” (Παντοτε χαίρετε. Semper gaudete.) “ And the ransomed of the Lord shall  
 “ come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon  
 “ their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
 “ and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” “ In the  
 “ world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good  
 “ cheer.” (d)

*Self-Denial, &c.* “ If any man (saith Jesus Christ)  
 “ will come after me, let him deny himself, and  
 “ take up his cross daily, and follow me.” “ Put  
 “ off the old man with his deeds; knowing this that  
 “ our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body  
 “ of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we  
 “ should not serve sin.” “ If ye live after the flesh,  
 “ ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify  
 “ the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” “ They that  
 “ are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections  
 “ and lusts.” “ Mortify therefore your members which  
 “ are upon the earth: keep under your bodies, and bring  
 “ them into subjection. For though we walk in the  
 “ flesh, we do not war after the flesh.” “ For the  
 “ weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty  
 “ through God, to the pulling down of strong holds,  
 “ casting down imaginations, and every high thing  
 “ that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.”

(d) Ps. xxxiii. 1. xcvi. 11. Rom. v. 2. Phil. iv. 4. 1 Pet.  
 i. 8. James, i. 9, 10. 1 Thess. v. 18, 16. Is. xxxv. 10. John.  
 xvi. 33.

“ Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (e)

*Edification.* “ Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.” “ For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared with it.” “ He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; but he is in the way of life that keepeth instruction.” “ The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” “ Build up yourselves in your most holy faith.” “ As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” “ Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” “ If any man have ears to hear let him hear.” “ Take heed *what* ye hear.” “ Believe not every spirit: but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” “ Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” “ Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all.” “ See that ye walk circumspectly, not

(c) Luke, ix. 23. Eph. iv. 22. Col. iii. 9. Rom. vi. 5. viii. 13. Gal. v. 24. Col. iii. 5. 1 Cor. ix. 27. 2 Cor. x. 3. Rom. xii. 2.

“ as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because  
 “ the days are evil.” (f)

II. RELATIVE OR SOCIAL DUTIES. The duties a man owes to society are all comprised under the general terms “ doing justly ” and “ loving mercy,” and all emanate from that most comprehensive and admirable precept given by our Lord,—“ Do ye unto  
 “ others, as ye would they should do unto you.” Thus it is, that we are enjoined to abstain from offering the least wrong or injury to others, in their person, their property, or their reputation: we are exhorted to “ render to all their due,” to be sincere and upright in all our words and actions, to speak truth invariably, to abide by our promise though it be to our hurt, to “ provide things honest in the sight  
 “ of all men.” All fraud and falsehood in our professions and dealings, all injustice and violence, all malignity and envy, are expressly and repeatedly forbidden. We are cautioned against being angry at others without cause; we are commanded most forcibly to abstain from slander: being exhorted “ to speak  
 “ evil of no man,” and neither to raise evil reports ourselves against our neighbours, nor to promulgate them when they have been raised by others. Not only are we forbidden to injure others in any respect whatever; but we are taught that it is our bounden duty “ to do good to all men ” as far as we have

(f) Prov. iii. 13. viii. 11. x. 17. xv. 32. Ps. cxi. 2. Jude, 20.  
 1 Pet. ii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 13. Mark, iv. 23, 24. 1 John, iv. 1. 1 Thess.  
 v. 21. Heb. xiii. 9. 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. Eph. v. 15, 16.



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ability and opportunity, having however a still more forcible command with respect "to them who are" of the household of faith." We are required to assist others in their necessities and distresses, to sympathize with them in their afflictions, to rejoice in their prosperity; when it is necessary, to distribute to them of our worldly substance for the supply of their wants; to aim at converting such of them as are unbelievers, either in theory or practice, from "the error of their way;" to reprove them, when it is requisite, in the spirit of meekness, and use every effort, consistent with other duties, to promote their welfare temporal and spiritual. With regard to enemies, we are commanded to "love" them. Not only is the "rendering evil for evil" forbidden, but we are commanded to return good for evil: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for by so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head;" (g) that is, as Parnell correctly explains the metaphor, in his "Hermit,"—

"Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,  
"With heaping coals of fire upon its head;  
"In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,  
"And loose from dross the silver runs below."

Intercession in worship is also an essential, though much neglected branch of our duty to others. The

(g) Prov. xxv. 21, 22. Rom. xii. 20.

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mutual love of the first Christians seems to have been principally kept alive by prayers for each other : and in all times this duty of intercession properly exercised, raises Christian brotherhood as much above the common class of human friendships, as heaven is above earth. “ I thank my God, (said the apostle Paul to his friend Timothy,) that without ceasing “ I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night “ and day.” And thus did all the primitive Christians, drawing down mercies from heaven through the appointed medium, and causing a confluence of spiritual blessings to flow upon each, in answer to the united supplications of all. Christians are, in like manner, exhorted to “ pray for kings, and all that are in “ authority;” and indeed, by fair inference, if not by express command, every individual in each class of society, is required to pray for the welfare and happiness of all other persons. And this duty is not only binding, but manifestly *beneficial* : for sincere and fervent intercession would evidently be one of the best arbitrators of differences, the best cure and preservative against unkind tempers, angry and malignant passions, the best promoter of true friendships; as well as an unfailing test of the state of our own hearts with regard to ourselves and others. All these, and numerous other duties which I cannot here specify, have their foundation laid in the noblest sentiment, love; and hence it follows that Christianity is a Religion of benevolence. “ Thou shalt love thy “ neighbour *as thyself*.” “ A new commandment

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“ I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I  
 “ have loved you, that ye also love one another.”  
 “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that  
 “ he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation  
 “ for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought  
 “ also to love one another.” “ And this command-  
 “ ment have we from him, that he who loveth God,  
 “ *love his brother also.*” (*h*)

Besides the general precepts to which I have thus  
 adverted in a very cursory manner, prescribing the  
 duties of justice and benevolence towards all mankind,  
 there are also particular injunctions in regard to the  
 duties incumbent upon us in the several stations and  
 relations we occupy in civil and social life; all of  
 which are of great importance to the welfare of families  
 and nations, as well as of individuals. Of these I  
 here present you with a selection.

*Husbands and Wives.* “ Husbands love your wives,  
 “ and be not bitter against them.” “ Let every one  
 “ of you in particular so love his wife even as him-  
 “ self: so ought men to love their wives as their  
 “ own bodies.” “ Husbands, love your wives, even  
 “ as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself  
 “ for it; for we are members of his body, of his  
 “ flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a  
 “ man leave his father and mother, and shall be  
 “ joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one

(*h*) Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 20. 2 Tim. i. 3. Matt. xxii. 39.  
 John, xiii. 34. 1 John, iv. 10, 11, 21. James, ii. 8. Luke, x. 33—  
 35, &c.

“flesh.” “Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.” “Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.” “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.” “Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” (i) “The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.” “A prudent wife is from the Lord. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her: she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.” (k)

*Parents and Children.* “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in

(i) *Proh quales feminas habent Christiani!* said Libanius: — O! What excellent wives the *Christians* have!

(k) Col. iii. 19. Eph. v. 25—30, 31. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Eph. v. 33, 22, 23, 24. 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. Prov. xix. 13, 14. xxxi. 11, 12, 26, 27, 28.

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“ the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; having  
 “ them in subjection with all gravity.” “ Train up a  
 “ child in the way he should go, and when he is old  
 “ he will not depart from it.” “ Chasten thy son  
 “ betimes, while there is hope; and let not thy soul  
 “ spare for his crying. For foolishness is bound up  
 “ in the heart of a child : but the rod and reproof  
 “ give wisdom : withhold not correction, and thou  
 “ shalt deliver his soul from hell.” “ The children  
 “ ought not to lay up for the parents : but the parents  
 “ for the children.” “ If any provide not for those  
 “ of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is  
 “ worse than an infidel.” “ Children, obey your  
 “ parents in the Lord ; for this is right. Obey your  
 “ parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the  
 “ Lord.” “ Honour thy father and thy mother  
 “ (which is the first commandment with promise)  
 “ that it may be well with thee, and that thou  
 “ mayest live long on the earth.” “ The eye which  
 “ mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his  
 “ mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out,  
 “ and the young eagles shall eat it.” (l)

*Masters and Servants.* “ Masters, give unto your  
 “ servants that which is just and equal, forbearing  
 “ threatening ; knowing that ye also have a Master  
 “ in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with  
 “ him.” “ Despise not the cause of thy man-servant,

(l) Eph. vi. 4. 1 Tim. iii. 4. Prov. xxii. 6. xix. 18. xiii. 24.  
 xxii. 15. xxiii. 13, 14. xxix. 15. 2 Cor. xii. 14 1 Tim. v. 8.  
 Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3. Col. iii. 20. Prov. xxx. 17.

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“ or of thy maid-servant, when they contend with thee. Did not he that made thee in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us all in the womb?” “ Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.” “ Servants, obey your masters in all things, and please them well; not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity.” “ Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward: for this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience-sake towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.” “ Be content with your wages.” (m)

*Magistrates and Subjects.* “ The judges and officers that shall be rulers over you shall be able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. They shall judge the people at all seasons, and hear the causes between their brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.” “ They shall not wrest judgment; they shall not respect persons in judgment; but they shall hear the small as well as the great. They shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the

(m) Col. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 9. Job, xxxi. 13, 15. Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8. Col. iii. 22. Tit. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19. Luke, iii. 14.

“ righteous. They shall not be afraid of the face of  
“ man, for the judgment is God’s.” “ It is an  
“ abomination to kings to commit wickedness; for  
“ the throne is established by righteousness.” “ The  
“ prince shall not take of the people’s inheritance by  
“ oppression, to thrust them out of their posses-  
“ sion.” “ Mercy and truth preserve the king:  
“ and his throne is upholden by mercy.” “ Take  
“ away the wicked from before the king, and his  
“ throne shall be established in righteousness.”  
“ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers;  
“ for there is no power but of God: the powers that  
“ be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore,  
“ resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God,  
“ and they that resist shall receive to themselves  
“ damnation: for rulers are not a terror to good  
“ works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not then be  
“ afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and  
“ thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the  
“ minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do  
“ that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the  
“ sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a  
“ revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth  
“ evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not  
“ only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For  
“ this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God’s  
“ messengers.” “ Submit yourselves to every ordi-  
“ nance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to  
“ the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto  
“ them that are sent by him for the punishment of



“ evil doers, and for the praise of them that do  
“ well.” (n)

You can scarcely fail to remark, that the exhortations to these and other relative duties are independent of *character*. We are commanded to be dutiful to parents, affectionate to children, kind to servants, just to subjects, obedient to magistrates and monarchs, *absolutely*; and not merely dutiful to *tender* parents, affectionate and communicative of instruction to *dutiful* children, diligent under the employment of *kind* masters, obedient to *wise* governors, and so on; which appears to me ■ mark of great wisdom in the deliverance of such injunctions. For, we thence learn, that though the *extent* of obligation to several duties may perhaps vary in some slight degree with the conduct of the individuals towards whom the respective sorts of behaviour are due, yet that the obligation itself results from the mutual relation subsisting between the persons; so that each particular duty *must* be performed, or we are criminal: whereas, if the relative duties were made to depend upon character, they would depend upon our *interpretation* of character, which may often be erroneous; and a man's mind, nay, his *fancy*, would, in reference to his duties to others, become his law, his tribunal, and his judge.

There is an important class of reciprocal duties

(n) Deut. xvi. 18, 19. i. 13. 16. 17. Exod. xviii. 21, 22. Lev. xix. 15. Prov. xvi. 12. Ezek. xlvi. 18. Prov. xx. 28, xxv. 5. Rom. xiii. 1, 2—6. 1 Pet. ii. 13—16.

arising from the connexion subsisting between pastors or ministers of churches, and their flocks; but these diverge into too many separate branches to be adequately treated in small compass. I therefore proceed to notice, though with infinitely more brevity than is commensurate with their immense moment,

III. DUTIES TO GOD. In the Gospel we have imparted to us the noblest and most exalted conceptions of the Supreme Being; and the various relations in which he has been pleased to manifest himself, as sustaining, in respect of his creatures and of his people, are amply revealed; while the correspondent duties are urged upon us, and the most palpable and obvious directions given with regard to their extent and obligation. Thus we are commanded to “love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength;” which is represented by our Saviour as “the first and greatest commandment;” (o) and from which all other duties emanate. We are told that we must be animated with a pure and ardent zeal for his glory, and must consider the pleasing and honouring him, as infinitely preferable to the indulgence of any sensual inclinations. We are farther taught, that our *love* to God, if genuine, will be accompanied with a solemn and holy *fear* of his Divine majesty; indeed the terms are described as in a measure co-existent, neither operating to any great extent without the other. It is farther required

(o) Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

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of us to exercise trust in God; implying faith, confidence in his wisdom and mercy, unreserved submission to his will, and resignation to all his dispensations; and we are exhorted to live under a practical and habitual conviction of his essential presence with all, and of his spiritual presence with truly devout persons. A strict obedience to his righteous commands is most energetically enforced; and this, besides honour and worship in general, includes the diligent and faithful discharge of every personal and social duty. We are also urged to aspire after a conformity to God in all his imitable or communicable attributes; to be "holy as he is holy, pure as he is pure, perfect as he is perfect," &c. and to this end we have set before us the spotless example of "the Captain of our salvation;" being assured that we most resemble God, when the greatest "portion of the same mind" is in us, "which was also in Christ Jesus." We are required to worship "God who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth:" deadness, dullness, and formality, both in prayer and praise, are hence excluded; and a remarkable simplicity and purity of worship is represented in the New Testament as that which God will most approve. The rites therein prescribed are few in number, and highly excellent in their signification. The only sacraments enjoined upon us are "*Baptism*" and "*the Supper of the Lord*;" both of which, being positive institutions, should doubtless be observed with all possible regard to the circumstances exhibited in their primi-

tive establishment. Great care seems taken, however, to guard us against mistaking "the form" for "the power of godliness;" and we are taught that rites and ceremonies are as nothing, unless the heart be purified and the conduct become holy and upright. Private meditation, secret, domestic, and public worship, are each most powerfully recommended, nay commanded: the benefits resulting from the "communion of saints" in worship, and the evils flowing from "forgetting to assemble ourselves together," are strikingly depicted. We are also shown the advantage as well as the duty of "confessing our sins to God;" and of throwing ourselves entirely upon his covenanted mercy for pardon, acceptance, and gracious assistance. Much of this, I am well aware, is extremely repugnant to the notions which generally prevail; but it is consistent with Scripture; and you will scarcely be able to turn to a page in the New Testament, (where the subject is not purely historical,) in which you will not find exhortations to one or other of the duties I have here attempted to sketch.

It farther appears, being indeed a necessary consequence of the Christian system, that we are required, in order to worship God acceptably, to approach him through the appointed Mediator, by reason of whose intercession the prayers and praises of his sincere disciples are approved. Hence results another class of duties relating to "the Lord Jesus Christ," whom we are required to "receive by faith;" and whom we are taught to regard continually and habitually as our in-

structor, atonement, intercessor, guardian, example, &c. We are also exhorted to pray for the influences of God's Holy Spirit, and at all times so to conduct ourselves, as not to grieve or offend that Spirit, but rather to draw down a more copious communication of its influences. These latter duties, however, are not considered by all as such, but are regarded as of minor importance. I shall therefore throw together for your perusal a few passages from which you may learn that the sacred writers did not place those duties in a subordinate rank.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever ye shall  
“ ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you.”  
“ Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do all in the*  
“ *name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and  
“ the Father by him.” “ For through him we both  
“ have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” “ My  
“ sheep hear my voice, and I hear them, and *they*  
“ *follow me*.” “ We are the circumcision, which  
“ worship God in the Spirit and *rejoice* in Jesus  
“ Christ.” “ I am crucified with Christ: yet not  
“ I, but *Christ liveth in me*: and the life which I  
“ now live in the flesh, I live by *the faith* of the Son  
“ of God, who loved me and *gave himself* for me.”  
“ Whom, having not seen, *ye love*; in whom, though  
“ now ye see him not, yet *believing ye rejoice* with  
“ joy unspeakable and full of glory.” “ Let us run  
“ with patience the race that is set before us, *looking*  
“ *unto Jesus* the author and finisher of our faith.”  
“ If any man *love* not the Lord Jesus Christ, let

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“ him be anathema maran-atha.” Grace be with  
 “ all them that *love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.*” “ If  
 “ ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto  
 “ your children, how much more shall your heavenly  
 “ Father give his *Holy Spirit* to them that ask him?”  
 “ Quench not the Spirit.” “ Grieve not the Holy  
 “ Spirit of God.” “ Be not drunk with wine, where-  
 “ in is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” “ If  
 “ we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.” (p)

From this view of Christian duties, slight and imperfect as I am conscious it is, I trust you will perceive that the New Dispensation, considered as a source of morality, is infinitely superior to any scheme that was ever devised by the wisest and greatest of men, who were not favoured by a revelation from God. Such is the simplicity of Gospel precepts that the plainest and most uncultivated understanding may comprehend them; and such, at the same time, their beauty and excellency, their fitness to expand the intellect, to enrich the soul, to improve the character of individuals, as well as to illuminate the whole world and to fill it with harmony and love, that they furnish scope for the noblest contemplations of the

(p) John, xvi. 23. Col. iii. 17. Eph. ii. 18. John, x. 27. Phil. iii. 3. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 8. Heb. xii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Eph. vi. 24. Luke, xi. 13. 1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. iv. 30. v. 18. Gal. v. 25. For many more texts thrown into an order well calculated to enforce the several Christian duties, the reader may consult Gastrell's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and Warden's *System of Revealed Religion*.

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philanthropist and the philosopher. “ The law of  
“ the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testi-  
“ mony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;  
“ the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the  
“ heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, en-  
“ lightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean,  
“ enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are  
“ true and righteous altogether.” (q)

But rules of moral duty, however complete, precepts, however excellent, will be of comparatively little avail, unless they be enforced by suitable motives, obvious to the understanding, and energetic in their operation. And here again the superiority of the Religion of Jesus is equally evident. Good men are supported in the path of duty, and consoled under affliction, by the enchanting prospect of “ an *eternal*  
“ weight of glory:” bad men are persuaded to turn from their evil courses by having exhibited to them “ the terrors of the Lord;”—the delights of heaven, the unending anguish of hell; the blessed “ society  
“ of the just made perfect,” and that of “ devils  
“ and damned spirits;” are the awful alternatives placed before them. The example of him “ who,  
“ though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor,” and tabernacled amongst men, as well to show them the way to glory, as to secure glory for them, stimulates powerfully to action: while the privileges of the Gospel and the truly extraordinary means em-



ployed to entitle believers to those privileges, furnish in their turn admirable incentives to virtuous conduct. Let me entreat you to peruse attentively the few portions of Scripture referred to at the foot of this page; (r) and then to consider whether any thing less than the irresistible power which “out of stones” could raise up children to Abraham,” can touch the soul which is insensible to the impressions they are calculated to make. Lastly, for our great encouragement, Divine assistances are promised to strengthen and preserve in the path of duty all who are duly aware of their own insufficiency, and humbly seek for guidance and protection where alone they are to be obtained.

I have, now, my dear friend, executed the task I undertook at your entreaty: happy shall I esteem myself if it be so begun, continued, and carried through as, under the blessing of God, to transmit conviction to your mind, and render you in *all* respects such as I wish to see you. But, to this end, allow me to remind you, that I undertook it in consequence of an implied contract: *my* part is accomplished, faithfully, I trust, though, doubtless, very imperfectly; let me, then, beg of you to execute *your* part with all possible fidelity, and it will be easy to predict the issue of the inquiry. Meditate upon what I have written; and then institute a few comparisons. Com-

(r) Rom. vi. 9—13. 1 Cor. vi. 20. vii. 23. xv. 50—58. Phil. ii. *passim*. iii. 7—21. iv. 1—7. Col. iii. 1—17. Eph. ii. 8—22. iii. iv. 1—5. 30—32.

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pare, for example, the many difficulties, and absurdities, the baseless supports and the cheerless prospects of Infidelity, with the few difficulties, the “reasonable service,” the “everlasting foundations,” and the glorious and delightful prospects of Christianity. Compare again, the cold speculations, the unsatisfactory and forced criticisms, the proud spirit of rejection, the assumed superiority in point of information over those who were personally “taught of Christ,” the false or ridiculous translations, and the feebleness of motives to love of Christ and devotedness to God, which are exhibited and exemplified by those who usurp to themselves the exclusive title of “*rational* Christians;” with the noble glow of sentiment, the natural and obvious interpretations, the humble and teachable disposition, the grateful eagerness to receive instruction from the word of God communicated by Prophets and Apostles, the resolute determination to bend the mind to the *genuine* meaning of Scripture whatever it may be, and the ready yielding to the peculiar and powerful incentives furnished in the exquisite plan of redemption, manifested among many other professed disciples of Christ. Make these comparisons, I say, with your wonted acuteness and impartiality; and I have no fear that the result will be favourable to the cause I have here so feebly defended, and infinitely favourable to your own happiness.

If you wish, my friend, to have your capacious mind still farther ennobled and expanded by the influence of those truths which can make “the

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“ simple wise,” and have been known to confer a remarkable dignity of character and enlargement of soul(s) upon the otherwise ignoble and illiterate ;—if you wish to have your “ conversation in heaven ” while your residence is on earth, to “ see the invisible,” and secretly enjoy that Saviour whom “ to know is life eternal ;”—if you wish to place your trust on a solid rock, to have your hope anchored in eternity, your charity glowing toward all mankind ;—if you wish to enjoy all the blessings of Providence with a new zest unknown before, to gaze upon the delights of creation with new eyes, to explore the wonders of nature with double ardour ;—if you wish to evince a meek, gentle, compliant, forgiving, benevolent, conscientious behaviour in every station and character, to be a dutiful and respectful son, a discreet and tender husband, an affectionate and pious parent, an honest and obedient subject ;—if you wish to possess a heart swelling with love to God, a tongue ready to speak his praises and defend his cause, hands prepared to do his work, and feet to “ walk in the “ way of his commandments ;”—if you wish to bear prosperity without high-mindedness, adversity without a murmur, to manifest calm resignation under affliction, patient acquiescence in all the divine dispensations, to honour God through life, and to glorify

(s) “ Il y a dans les maximes de l’Evangile une noblesse et une “ élévation où les cœurs vils et rampans ne sauroient atteindre. La “ Religion, qui fait les grandes âmes, ne paroît faite que pour elles : “ et il faut être grand ou le devenir, pour être Chrétien.” MASSILLON.

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him in death; to have the sting of the last great enemy deprived of its poison, and to quit the present life with a soul panting after immortality, and anxious to join the glorious assembly who “surround the throne of God and of the Lamb;”—if such as these be your desires, then, “forsake not the fountain of living waters,” walk not by the light “of sparks of your own kindling,” confide not in that strength which is “perfect weakness;” but throw yourself in imagination and in soul at the foot of the cross, implore with the deepest humility, yet with the unceasing ardour of Jacob, when he “wrestled with God and prevailed,” a sincere and active faith in the merits and mediation of a “crucified” Redeemer, daily and copious supplies of the purifying and invigorating influences of the Spirit, and an ability so to persevere unto the end of your course, that you may “adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.”

That these blessings may be yours: that you may here live *long* to enjoy and to impart much happiness; and at length, full of years and full of holiness, be called to partake of the “*rest which remaineth for the people of God,*” is the fervent prayer of

Your affectionate Friend.

THE END.

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